

hen-of-the-woods *Grifola frondosa*

Kingdom: Fungi

Division/Phylum: Basidiomycota

Class: Agaricomycetes

Order: Polyporales

Family: Meripilaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The body of a fungus (mycelium) is made up of strands called mycelia. The mycelium grows within the soil, a dead tree or other object and is rarely seen. The fruiting body that produces spores is generally present for only a short period of time but is the most familiar part of the fungus to people. The hen-of-the-woods grows in clumps of fan-shaped caps that overlap and are attached to the stalk. The gray-brown cap's upper surface is smooth or hairy. The cap is attached at one side to a very large stalk. The pores under the cap are white or yellow. The cap may be as much as three and one-fourth inches wide.

BEHAVIORS

Hen-of-the-woods may be found statewide in Illinois. Its clusters develop in a single mass or in groups around stumps and trees. Unlike plants, fungi do not have roots, stems, leaves, flowers or seeds. Hen-of-the-woods must absorb nutrients and water from the objects it grows in. Spores are produced in the fall. The spores provide a means of reproduction, dispersal and survival in poor conditions. Spore production occurs when conditions are favorable, generally with warm temperatures and ample moisture.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; peatlands

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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