

FUNGI IN SCHOOLS

for
CHILDREN
TEACHERS
PARENTS

and other
interested parties



FUNGUS TRAPS

This eelworm (nematode) has been killed by a fungus. You don't believe it? You can watch it happen if you put a very small pinch of soil onto a Petri dish of water agar, leave it at room temperature for some days and then look at it under a dissecting microscope. I did this about 40 years ago and with true beginner's luck found I was looking at eelworms wriggling in the traps of this fungus. The traps, or rings, develop from 3 cells and when the inner surface is touched the cells expand very suddenly and grip the unfortunate eelworm so tightly that it is unable to escape. Hyphae of the fungus then grow into the eelworm and digest it. Other fungi have developed different traps. Some have sticky knobs, other have elaborate loop-like structures; all are very efficient at their job of catching eelworms.

Fig. from: Kendrick, B (1986). *A Young Person's Guide to the Fungi*. Canada: Mycologue Publications, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 5M5. ISBN0-9692237-1-4, with kind permission of the author.

