
ILLUSTRATING FUNGI — 5

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EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR PAINTING FUNGI

In the first of these articles I stressed the need to use good quality watercolour paper, because a thin paper, or worse still, cartridge paper will buckle as soon as water is put on it, and it will then be impossible to control the flow of paint. It is false economy to use cheap materials, for it is difficult enough to achieve the result you want with watercolours, without having the added handicap of poor equipment.

When it comes to purchasing paints, the same principal of quality should apply. Do not go for the boxed set of student colours, but instead buy a small number of **Artists Quality Paints**. They are much nicer to use and nearly all the colours are guaranteed permanent. The following ten colours taken from the Winsor & Newton list would be ideal for the mycologist — painter: **New Gamboge; Naples Yellow; Raw Sienna; Indian Red; Alizarin Crimson; Warm Sepia; Burnt Sienna; Hookers Dark Green; Cobalt Blue; and Neutral Tint**. These colours will all have familiar names, except perhaps 'Neutral Tint'. This is actually a very dark brownish grey colour, and it has the great advantage of being able to be mixed with other colours, without making them look 'dirty'. A very useful colour then for deepening shadows. Whether you decide to buy pans or tubes, you will also need to buy an **empty paint box** to put them in, and as time goes on you can then add further colours as you feel the need.

Sable-haired watercolour brushes are far superior to any of the brushes made of synthetic hairs — and two sizes should be sufficient — a No. 1 and No. 4. A cheap brush in your box in addition to the two sable brushes is an excellent idea as a mixing brush. Try to get into the habit of doing all your paint mixing with this, and you will extend the life of your quality brushes immeasurably.

Other 'tools of the trade' which are recommended hardly cost anything. For example, always have a **piece of clean white paper** to lean on while you paint, for grease is liable to rub off your hands and once this contacts watercolour paper it acts like a barrier, and watercolours will not 'take' where your hands have been resting. A piece of **blotting paper** or tissue should always be handy for blotting the surplus off your brush before use, particularly when you start putting in the fine details. Your paint water should be changed frequently so that it is always fresh and clean, for you will never achieve clear colours on your paper if they have been mixed using dirty water. Finally, I can recommend the use of a **magnifying glass**. Even if you have good eyesight, the use of a magnifying glass to observe an enlarged version of something like the structure of the gills helps enormously in getting the drawing correct. The hand lens you take into the field on forays will probably not be ideal, for it is very small and probably enlarges too much for the purpose of doing a painting. Ideal is a lens 10 - 12 cm diameter, and which magnifies about four times.

The painting accompanying this article was the result of a private foray to a friend's garden in Berkshire. The garden comprises just an acre, and there was an amazing number of species in this small area, more than the owners had ever seen in previous years. I was in the happy position of being able to select for this painting just the most attractive fungi, and those whose colours would blend harmoniously on a printed page.



1. *Amanita muscaria*
 2. *Lepista nuda*
 3. *Russula krombholzii*
 4. *Russula aurora*

5. *Coprinus comatus*
 6. *Lycoperdon perlatum*
 7. *Laccaria laccata*
 8. *Macrocyttidia cucumis*

9. *Inocybe maculata*
 10. *Hygrocybe nigrescens*
 11. *Hygrocybe miniata*