



national science week 2010

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Look! There on that log, is it a plant? Is it an animal? No! It's a fungus!

Fungi are amazing, they are not plants or animals as some people think but are a class of organism all of their own. They can be small, single celled types to huge hectare spanning forms. They can live on and in plants, animals or the soil. They can also help or hinder the organism with which they live through parasitic or mutual relations, but the best bit about fungi is the beautiful fruiting bodies they create.

What interested you in science as a child?

I had no intention of going to uni when I was at high school, "Yes! No more school" was all I could think about, but after working in 'the real world' for a few years I became eager to learn more and decided to enrol. I always loved the outdoors and bushwalking so I completed a Diploma of Conservation and Land Management at the Ryde institute of TAFE in Sydney. This sparked my addiction in science which has yet to leave.



What did you study at university?

After TAFE I decided to enrol at UTAS. Tasmania seemed to me to be the best place to study environmental based units as it has a large area of wilderness in such a small and easily accessible area. I finished my Bachelor of Science in 2009 majoring in Plant Science.

What is your current research project?

My honours research involves looking at the species of fungi found on dead wood. The decomposition of dead wood is an essential ecosystem process within a forest. Fungi turn dead

wood into useable nutrients for plants and provide habitat and food for many animals. I'm collecting data on what species of fungus is found on what size dead wood and the type of decay that the wood has undergone. This research will help forestry managers plan better for biodiversity and help catalogue species found in association to certain plants.

What do you love about science?

Love about science? Everything! (except statistics). Being able to research a topic in the literature and then plan an experiment, go out and do it, collect data and then use that data to show how or why something does what it does is awesome. It also helps that the people who do science and work with me are slightly crazy, just like me 😊

Find out more about studying Plant Science at www.utas.edu.au/plantsci

www.youngtassiescientists.com