



**I M P A C T**  
**R E P O R T**  
2024

# Myco Manchester

## A dynamic community mushroom cooperative

Myco Manchester works to connect people to land and community through the lens of fungi and ecology. We started out growing mushrooms in a dank basement in 2020, and have grown to teach people how to grow mushrooms in the community and in schools, run foraging and ecology events, host volunteer sessions, and work with like-minded fungal folk on all things mycelial.

As an organisation Myco is not driven by profit: we're interested in connecting people to fungi, land, and other people—whether that's through helping you identify something interesting you've spotted on a walk, or by sharing knowledge around how you can grow your own mushrooms at home. However we still recognise that at the end of the day, everyone still needs to pay their rent.

Being a co-op allows us to keep things affordable by enabling membership control over our pricing as well as making sure everyone is paid fairly and equally for their time. It also allows us to have a shared interest in the future of the organisation: we're all really passionate about the work we do and want to support Myco to become a resilient organisation that we hope will still be sharing our love of nature and fungi with people in fifty years time.

We won't be becoming mushroom billionaires any time soon but we will be doing what we love, with people we love - and that feels like a pretty sweet deal to us!

Thanks for taking the time to check out our first ever impact report for 2024.



Mush love,

Sølvi, SB, Rob, Jesse and Jon x



# What we've been up to in 2024

In 2024 we made a big push into education and delivering events! We delivered 47 events to over 900 people around Manchester and North West England.

With the help of our lovely event attendees we co-created over 200 grow-buckets in our signature Myco pink, for folks to grow tasty oyster mushrooms at home. The buckets are re-useable, avoiding the typical single use plastic waste created by traditional mushroom grow bags, and participants learned how to refill and care for them at home.







We also inoculated over 120 edible mushroom logs for attendees to take away and care for in their homes or community spaces. In other words, we made around 40 m of logs - approximately the height of a mature english oak!

In 2024 we launched our new wormery building course with the help of a grant from In Our Nature. We recycled 20 old wheelie bins donated by Biffa into wonderful wormeries. These bins were made by schools and community groups to save reduce the carbon footprint of the food waste they generate on site, while making nutrient rich compost in the process.





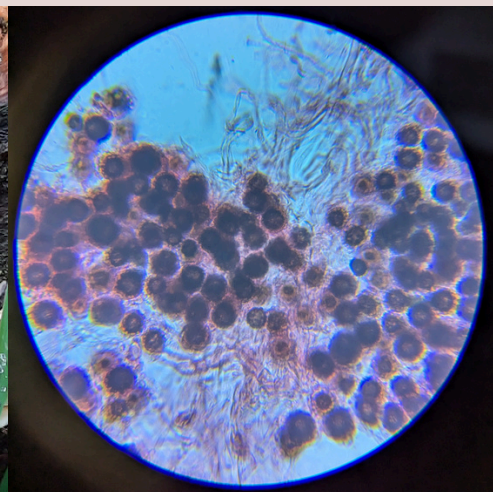
We also expanded our capacity for taking in volunteers in 2024. Our volunteers clocked over 200 hours of work, making mushroom buckets at the farm and carrying out citizen-science biodiversity surveys around Manchester.

Added over 50 new records to our [community iNaturalist page](#), making our own little contribution to global biodiversity data collection efforts. Please consider joining our iNaturalist group (it's completely free) to learn more about local species in your area and help our combined effort!



# Memorable mushrooms!

We've also been on quite a few field trips this year! Close to our home at Platt Fields Market Garden, Manchester we've found parrot waxcaps, splitgills and flame shield mushrooms. Further afield, on our Delamere woods mushroom identification weekend in Cheshire, our guests found earthstars, false chantarelles and rustgills. We also got to look at different spores under the microscope and got some beautiful pictures!



# Partnerships - growing the hyphal network

This year saw us receive additional Awards for All funding from the National Lottery to develop our volunteering program, which has been running intermittently throughout the year.

As well as being continually grateful for the lovely mushroom corner the Manchester Urban Diggers have helped us create at Platt Field Market Gardens, we worked with some other great groups this year!

In April, Co-op hosted us to give a wormeries talk to their Eco-Conference attendees. At the event, attended by 162 children and their teachers across 23 academies, participants learned how to create wormeries at home, mad native wildflower seed bombs (Manchester Urban Diggers and Sow The City), learned about the Royal Horticultural Society's National Education Nature Parks, and took Fair and Funky's smoothie bike for a ride!





Starting in June, a grant from [In Our Nature](#) helped us to teach folks about wormeries, where we delivered our workshops to schools like Wilbraham Primary and community groups like [Beswick Urban Growers](#). We also worked with ION to create a [video guide to building your own wormery](#), and our companion written guide can be found [here](#).

In September a grant from Kew Gardens took us around the corner from our farm to [Ladybarn Community Hub](#) where we taught volunteers how to grow mushrooms on logs, which [Kew wrote an article about here](#). We returned in November to help out turning the community centre's garden into a food growing space, adding myceliated mulch to their raised beds and creating an edible oyster mushroom log pile in a suitably shady spot.



Also in September, we delivered a series of three events in Haigh Woodland Park, run by Wigan Council. We delivered a bucket cultivation class, taught people about how to use fungi in their gardens, and gave a guided mushroom tour of the site.

November brought our year of partnership work to a close at Portland Basin Museum, run by Thameside Metropolitan Borough Council. This full day event was the largest bucket cultivation workshop we've ever done, and with our guests we created a total of 72 buckets across four hours!



# Mycelial miscellany

## Other fun(gal) stuff

We launched [our first batch of merch](#), to support our community lab fundraiser.

Two of our dedicated members also got mushroom tattoos—Jesse got a fabulous fly agaric by [Rachael Flowers](#) and Jon got a drippy common ink cap from [MaxAmos](#).

We found our first rotifer in a soil sample from one of our Soil Ecology courses, and captured the cute little beast feeding on video.



# Feedback from friends of fungi

We had some great feedback from our event participants this year! Of the 123 people who filled out our online feedback form:

88.6% rated our events 9/10 or higher.

98.4% learned something new.

94.3% felt more connected to nature.

91.1% felt their mental wellbeing improved.

This was further emphasised in glowing testimonials, which we've grouped into a few different categories across the following pages.



# Creating warm and inclusive learning environments

*"The space was very inclusive!"*

*"The trans-specific workshop was excellent as it felt like an incredibly safe space to turn up in, even though it was all new people."*

*"Friendly, engaging session, lots of opportunities to ask questions, explained in a very accessible way."*

*"Absolutely lovely people running the event who were willing to answer every question and created such a safe and welcoming environment!"*

*"The welcoming and engaging atmosphere made volunteering not feel like a chore at all."*

# Knowledgeable and passionate teachers

*"Jesse and Sølvi are brilliant teachers."*

*"Sølvi's knowledge and enthusiasm were great, and she was really engaging."*

*"Jesse's passion and expertise in foraging have ignited my personal desire to delve deeper into this 'lost' art."*

*"The guides really knew their stuff and were so friendly!"*

# Accessible and thoughtful approaches to sharing knowledge

*"It felt very much like the purpose was to share knowledge rather than flaunt it."*

*"The course material was tailored to accommodate attendees of varying levels of experience."*

*"Slides were lovely, and the tone was pitched well."*

*"Diversity of reading materials (video, audio, reading) and the casual nature of the discussion made it very accessible."*



# Creating opportunities for practical, hands-on learning

*"The session was hands-on, and everyone got the chance to work on every step of the process."*

*"A really nice mix of learning and doing!"*

*"Great scientific information and theory backed by hands-on, practical work and guidance."*

*"I loved that we got to take a kit home to recreate what we learned."*

*"Making the kimchi all together was communal and friendly, and I came away feeling very connected to my community."*

# Inspiring and engaging content

*"Drawing comparisons to fungi and queer experiences was a very useful tool for engagement."*

*"The vast amount of knowledge shared with regards to mushroom cultivation was amazing."*

*"Jesse expertly explained each variety, how to identify them, and provided tasting notes along with creative recipe ideas."*

*"The introduction explained well what to expect, and the explanation about mushrooms was brilliant."*

*"Sølvi skillfully navigated the topic with her trademark enthusiasm, making it accessible and engaging for everyone."*



# Fostering community connection and inclusivity

*"It was great to feel connected to the queer community."*

*"Gathering in little groups around found mushrooms or mosses felt communal and inclusive."*

*"Being queer-friendly was a huge bonus, meeting like-minded LGBTQIA folks met a largely unmet need."*

*"I especially loved the social element—it was lovely to meet other mushroom and wild geeks!"*

# Demographics - our niche in our ecosystem

From both our survey feedback and from personal conversations we've had with folks at events and workshops, we've realised our important role in connecting mycology and environmental awareness to communities that can sometimes be overlooked.

From our pool of respondents:

**46.9%** identify as transgender, non-binary or genderqueer.

**27.1%** describe themselves as disabled—this is slightly higher than the current UK average of 24%.

**95.1%** felt their access needs were met.



# Myco's future

We had a great year in 2024, and we're so grateful for the opportunities we had to work with so many lovely, inspiring folks.

We wouldn't be the organisation we are today without the continued support of every single person who attended our events, recommended us to friends and colleagues, provided feedback, bought some merch or volunteered their time with us!

That being said, we continue to face challenges that we have to adapt to, which can be especially difficult for an organisation whose workers are "passionate-but-part-time."

Our main focus for 2025 is to build on the great work we've done in 2024, while safeguarding the capacity of our members.

Our main plans for 2025 can be summarised on the following page:



- Continue to provide a growing range of events, in a range of formats.
- Providing clearer guidance on where events are held and how we deliver them.
- Improving our facilitation skills so that everyone has an opportunity to participate in our events ways that feel suited to their needs.
- Strengthen our networks by working in greater co-operation with others, all across North West England—and maybe beyond?

So watch this space 2025, the future's looking fungal!