

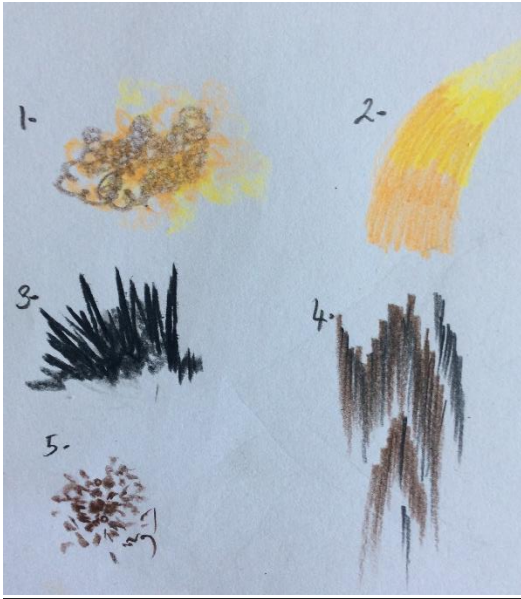


Beatrix Potter, Copyrighted

Think Beatrix Potter and immediately we think of her animal stories, but a lesser known fact is that before she became a writer, she was interested in mycology, the study of fungi. For at least a decade, she painted detailed studies of them.

In this session we'll be taking inspiration from her and using coloured pencils or watercolour pencils to try out our own studies. Watercolour paint would work equally as well and I've also seen beautiful fungi drawings done with simply sketching pencils.

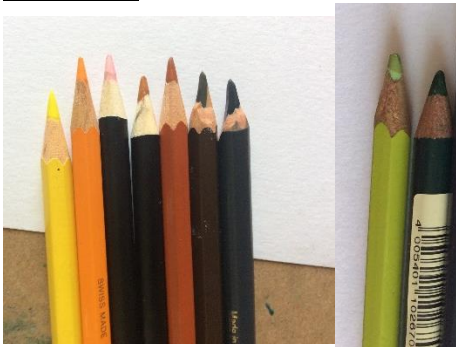
Mark making



It's important when drawing to think about the marks you make in order to describe the different textures you see.

1. **Scumbling:** use the pencil on its side in small circular, scribbling motions. Try layering up three colours (three always works better than two).
2. **Pressure:** A range of effects can be achieved dependent on the pressure you use. Try laying down a light pressure of one colour and then going over the top of this in a different colour using a heavier pressure.
3. **Side:** try using the side of the pencil in up and down motions to create a jagged effect. Good for grasses and foliage.
4. **Hatching:** try staggering hatched marks. Apply a heavy pressure and then as you move down your line, lighten the pressure. Good for some mushrooms stalks.
5. **Stippling:** if you're using watercolour pencil, wet the tip with a paintbrush and begin to stipple, starting in the centre. As the pencil begins to dry, the colour becomes lighter.

Main Task



Equipment: 2H/HB pencil, white paper – the stronger the better, coloured pencils or watercolour pencils (I used these): yellow, orange, pink, light brown, dark brown, grey, light green and dark green, if using watercolour pencils, a round brush.



Since it's unlikely that we have the exact colours needed, straight from the pack, we need to think about how to create some of the colours by blending. When working in pencil, work light to dark. Draw out your composition – as you can see from the photographic reference, I've chosen to only draw three mushrooms (odd numbers work better than even). I've also changed the position of the middle mushroom by lowering it to make a more pleasing composition. I begin by using a yellow pencil on its side, following the contours to lay down some colour. I'm not using the point as this could create indents in the paper at this stage. I then gently use an orange pencil to begin to darken. I am going to leave the white of the paper for the highlights.

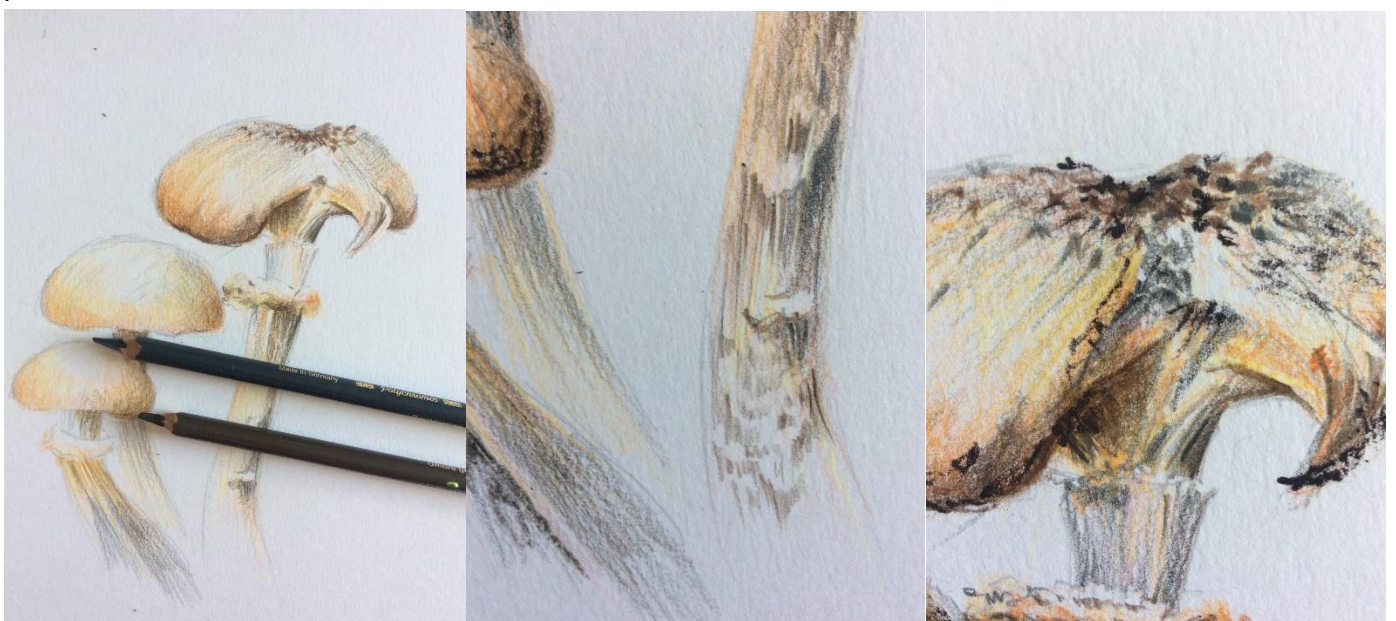


Once I've worked around the whole image this way, I use a light brown pencil to then add some contrast. I'm gently using the point now. Look at where some of the darker areas are and begin to lightly put these in. It's also time to think about different mark making techniques.

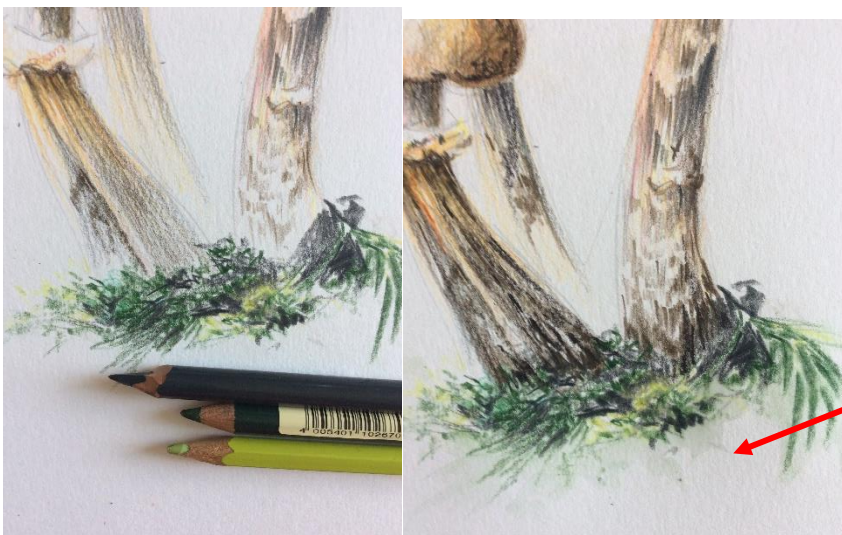
Stippling

scumbling

hatching



Using a dark brown and a grey pencil, I now want to work a little heavier and begin to think about some of the detail. I'm using the point of the pencils more now but also using the side to create more random stippling marks for the top of the mushrooms. Always be conscious of using the contours of the mushroom when laying down areas of tone e.g. the underside. Since I'm using watercolour pencils, I also wet the top for darker tones. If you're using normal coloured pencils, just apply a heavier pressure.



To help to plant the mushrooms into the page, I want to add a little foliage. I do this quite loosely, varying my marks and pressure with a light green, dark green and grey watercolour pencil.

I use a wet brush just to pull out some of the colour so that I'm not left with a hard edge.

Now I go back in and adjust my tones, darkening up areas, particularly around the base of the cap and on the stalks. I also use a light pink on the left hand side of the stalks – it's barely visible but creates a warmth. An orange with a medium pressure is used to help to create the roundness of the cap.



Final thoughts. There are a few things that I could consider/ amend if I did this again:

- I'd consider using a toned paper. A white pencil for highlights would've worked well on top of this.
- If toned paper isn't available, a light wash of brown watercolour or even a light tea stained background put in first would have got rid of the white of the paper.
- I'd like to try this again using light washes of watercolour paint to pick out large areas and then working over this, once dry, in watercolour pencils or coloured pencils.

Photographic References – you don't have to go exotic. The humble field mushroom can make a great study.

