



# Mysterious Mushrooms greening up a back yard

**By Regina Lovic**

A GROUP of mysterious purple mushrooms have formed in an almost perfect circle in a backyard in Ayr.

Eighty-six-year-old Ayr resident, Berteram "Hock" Keyse first found a small group of the purple mushrooms in his backyard almost 12 months ago, but more recently, they've created a near-perfect circle in his grass.

"They're mushies, but they're poisonous, I think," he said. "A little while ago, there was just a little ring of them in the backyard, but now it's five and a half metres in diameter, with mushrooms all the way around the outside.

"And the grass gets brownish on the outside. And the mushrooms just come up on the inside of it and then it all goes green. It just expands. It keeps getting bigger, but still in this circle, it's almost a perfect circle.

"And it's lush lawn inside and then this ordinary buffalo grass on the outside. (The heat) doesn't seem to worry it."

James Cook University Mycologist, Dr Sandra Abell-Davis said the mushrooms had formed a fairy ring, which would continue to grow in size.

She added that she was unable to accurately determine what species the mushrooms were without examining a specimen under a microscope, but thought they were probably *cortinari* *archerii* or *hygrocybe* mushrooms.

"The fairy ring will increase each time they fruit," she said.

"They are using the nutrients in that area and breaking down the old grass inside the ring and moving further out."

Dr Abell-Davis said the mushrooms had grown up out of the ground because they were reproducing.

"The living and eating part of the fungi, you can't see because there are little threads growing through the soil and grass litter.

"In simple terms, the male and female, although technically we don't call them that, have actually woven together and formed the structure, which is the mushroom."

Dr Abell-Davis said the luscious green grass inside the ring was probably caused by old mushroom breaking down, which results in nutrient-rich soil.

She said the mushrooms could also be poisonous and warned against touching or eating them.

Dr Abell-Davis said there was lots of folklore attached to fairy rings.

European superstitions warn against entering fairy rings.



The mysterious mushroom that have been found in a backyard in Ayr.

Picture: Regina Lovic



Mysterious circle formed by purple mushrooms in an Ayr backyard