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Comments: As a Master Naturalist and Master Gardener volunteer, I have been working with volunteers in the Old Growth Forest on the Virginia Tech campus for the last ten years removing invasive plants. In 2019 after a long period of summer rain many species of fungi started emerging in areas that just a few years ago had been carpeted in English ivy, privet, Asiatic bittersweet and other invasive plants. The property surrounding the area, a chemically managed Stadium and facilities area on three sides and a residential area on the fourth side had very few if any fungi emerging during that time. In the fall three cut leaf grape ferns which have a relationship with fungi emerged in the Old Growth Forest.

The fungi in the soil and possibly the herbaceous plants associated with fungi should also be considered as a criteria for the definition of an old growth forest.

Thank you to all working to protect and restore forest,

Beth Umberger