

FOSSIL FIELD GUIDE

See if you can find the most common fossils found in our area



BRYOZOANS

They look like bones, but they are pieces of coral.

Difficulty: VERY EASY



CRINOIDS

You can find tiny little rings in the rocks or longer pieces called stems.

Difficulty: EASY



BRACHIOPODS

These look just like shells!

Difficulty: EASY



HORN CORAL

These look like horns, just like in their name.

Difficulty: HARD



CEPHALOPODS

These are long fossils with rings on them, but bigger than the crinoids.

Difficulty: HARD



TRILOBITES

They look like pill bugs, but we usually only find some of their pieces, not the whole animal.

Difficulty: VERY HARD



WHAT IS A FOSSIL?

A fossil is what's left of a living thing that was alive a long time ago. Or it can be something that an animal or plant left behind, like a footprint, or even poop!

Fossils can be left from dinosaurs or other animals like insects and birds. Plants can be fossils too!

Fossils are usually hard and made out of rock.

HOW IS A FOSSIL MADE?

Sometimes when an animal or plant dies, it falls into the water and sinks. Then it gets covered up with mud. The soft parts of an animal, like the skin, break down but the hard parts like the bones and shells can last a long time. After a long time, the mud hardens and turns into a rock that is in the shape of the animal!

CAN WE FIND FOSSILS HERE?

Absolutely! The Cincinnati area is full of amazing fossils that anyone can find. Scientists who study fossils are called **paleontologists**.

The most common fossils found here are from a time period called the **Ordovician**, which was over 480 million years ago!

During the Ordovician, our area was covered with a small ocean, so the fossils we find are usually sea animals.

