

Fungi of the Hills and Fleurieu

Fungi play important roles in all ecosystems from our backyards and school grounds to forests, heath and deserts. Many fungi are recyclers, helping break down dead plant and animal material and putting nutrients back into the soil. Many others form essential partnerships with trees and other plants with the fungi collecting nutrients and water from the soil and passing them to roots. In return the plants provide energy-giving sugars. Fungi may be present all year round but are most common in autumn and winter, particularly following rain. It is important that we don't damage fungi otherwise they can't continue their important roles.

We know very little about the edibility or toxicity of native fungi. There is no safe way you can tell which ones are safe to eat. **DO NOT EAT ANY FUNGUS FROM THE WILD.** If you touch a fungus, always wash your hands afterwards.

BASIDIOMYCETES (fungi that produce their spores on club-shaped structures called basidia)

PUFFBALLS AND EARTHSTARS
Fruit-body usually spherical; spore mass powdery when mature; with small mouth or pore.

Collared Earth Star
Geastrum triplex



Starts as an onion-shaped ball with a pointed tip. Outer layer splits, peeling back into a star-shape 'puffball'. If touched, spores will puff through a central hole.

EARTHBALLS
Fruit-body usually spherical; spore mass powdery when mature; upper surface breaks down or splits open irregularly.


Dye Ball
Pisolithus arhizus



Large rounded fungus looking like horse droppings. When mature, the 'skin' breaks down and the powdery spores blow away. It has been used as a dye.


TOOTH FUNGI
Fruit-body with teeth, pegs or spines under cap, or a bracket or flat; stem present or absent.

Wood Hedgehog
Hydnum repandum



Cream to light orange-brown cap with brittle spines underneath.


Black Tooth
Phellodon sp.



Shallow funnel-shaped leathery fungus. Dark grey cap with white edge. Tiny 'teeth' under cap with black stem.


TOUGH PORE FUNGI
Fruit-body with pores under cap, bracket or flat with pored surface; texture rubbery, leathery or woody.

Scarlet Bracket
Pycnoporus coccineus



Fan-shaped scarlet fungus. Looks like thick shelves. Was used by Aboriginal groups for its antibacterial properties. Recycles dead logs and branches.


Turkey Tail
Trametes versicolor



A shelf-like, variably coloured, often striped fungus. Grows on dead logs, branches, wooden fence posts.

JELLIES
Fruit-body gelatinous, brain- or blob-shaped, a disc or coral- or club-shaped.

Yellow Brain
Tremella mesenterica



Yellow intestine-like fungus. It is parasitic on another fungus growing on the wood.

CLUBS AND CORALS
Simple club or branched; texture fleshy; often brightly coloured.

Coral Fungus
Ramaria australiana



Looks like coral or cauliflower.

SOFT PORE FUNGI
Fruit-body with pores under cap; usually with a central stem; texture fleshy or soft.

Weeping Bolete **INTRODUCED**
Suillus granulatus



Orange-brown to brown-yellow cap. Sponge-like underneath. Stem is pale yellow, often with brown raised dots near the top. Grows under pine trees.

SMOOTH OR WRINKLED FUNGI
Fruit-body with smooth or wrinkled surface under cap or bracket; stem present (rarely) or absent.

Hairy Curtain Crust
Stereum hirsutum



Yellow to orange shelf-like fungus, hairy on top, wavy edges and a leathery feel. A wood rotter.

BIRDS' NEST FUNGI
Fruit-body small, cup-shaped with tiny 'eggs'; often on wood or litter.

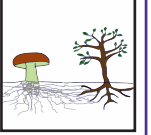
Bird's Nest
Cyathus olla



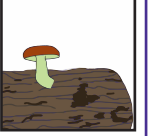
Grey to greyish-yellow. The 'eggs', which contain spores, are hurled from the 'nest' when hit by raindrops.

LIFE MODE


Mycorrhizal
has a symbiotic relationship with a living plant




Saprotrophic
breaks down plant and animal material



Parasitic
takes nutrients from a living plant/animal



Known to be poisonous




Photography: Phil Bridle (PB), David Catcheside (DC), Kathleen Matthews (KM), Anthony Robinson (AR)
This identification chart is a collaborative project between Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges and the Adelaide Fungal Studies Group.

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BASIDIOMYCETES

(fungi that produce their spores on club-shaped structures called basidia)

GILLED FUNGI

Fruit-body with gills under cap, usually with a stem.

Yellow Stainer **INTRODUCED**
Agaricus xanthodermus



Poisonous. Large fungus with squarish cap. Cap and stem of young specimens turn yellow if scratched. Has a phenolic/carbolic smell.

Fly Agaric **INTRODUCED**
Amanita muscaria



Poisonous. Large scarlet fungus with white warts on cap and frilly ring on the stem. Traditionally used to attract and kill flies. Often grows under pines.

Death Cap **INTRODUCED**
Amanita phalloides



A **deadly poisonous** fungus. Should never be touched or eaten. Greenish cap, distinctive ring on stem. Grows under oak trees.

Vermilion Grisette
Amanita xanthocephala



Warty fungus with a yellow to orange cap and no ring on the stem. Look for orange around base of stem. Grows around Eucalyptus trees.

Yellow Navel
Lichenomphalia chromacea



Although this looks like fungus - it is not. It is a lichen (an essential partnership between a fungus and an alga). Grows on bare soil.

GILLED FUNGI

Fruit-body with gills under cap, usually with a stem.

Spectacular Rust Gill
Gymnopilus junonius



A large fungus with an orange to brown cap and a ring on its stem. Forms colourful clusters on dead logs, stumps and at the base of trees.

Green Skinhead
Cortinarius austrovenetus



Green cap and mustard yellow stem. Green is not a common colour in fungi.

Lawyer's Wig
Coprinus comatus



First emerges from the ground as a white scaly cylinder, the cap opens up, becoming bell-shaped. The gills gradually turn to black liquid. It was used as writing ink.

The Emperor
Cortinarius archeri



Bright purple fungus that turns slightly brown as it ages. It can be found under Eucalyptus trees.

Little Bleeder
Mycena kuurkacea



Small brown fungus with cone-shaped cap. When stem is broken it bleeds a clear red liquid. Grows on dead wood and bark.

CUPS AND DISCS

Fruit-body a cup or disc; usually small.

Orange Peel Fungus
Aleuria aurantia



Bright orange, wavy discs that look like an orange peel.

HARD DISCS, CUSHIONS AND BALLS

Fruit-body disc-, cushion- or ball-shaped; hard; often with small dots on surface.

Dung Buttons
Poronia erici



A hard, button-like, white-grey fungus dotted with tiny star-shaped holes. Spores are released through these holes. The fungus grows on marsupial dung.

GILLED FUNGI

Fruit-body with gills under cap, usually with a stem.

Ghoul Fungus
Hebeloma aminophilum



Pinkish brown to cream cap. Grows near rotting animals or bones - can sometimes grow out of decomposing animal bodies. *Aminophilum* means 'ammonia lover'.

Pixie's Parasol
Mycena interrupta



A rare fungus in South Australia. Blue cap with a white stem. Grows on dead logs and tree trunks.

Brittlegill
Russula purpureoflava



Purple, slightly dish-shaped caps. Gills are mustard yellow. The stem breaks like chalk.

STINKHORNS

Fruit-body a cage, egg, sea-star or phalloid (contained within an egg at first); spore mass slimy, often foul-smelling.

Starfish Fungus
Aseroe rubra



Bright red fungus. Looks like a starfish on a white stalk. Slimy and smells like rotting meat which attracts flies.

Smooth Cage
Ileodictyon gracile



A white smelly fungus that grows like a web in the shape of a cage. Can detach from its base and roll along the ground.

PINS

Pin-shaped fruit body; texture fleshy, gelatinous or tough.

Jelly Baby
Leotia lubrica



Yellow to green gelatinous fungus with a rounded 'cap' on a stem.