

Pseudocolus fusiformis (E. Fisch.) Lloyd, 1909

Common Name: Eggbeater Fungus, Stinky Squid.

Description: Fruiting body consists of a stipe topped by long, vertical arms that are usually fused together at the tips. A small fungus, to 80 mm high and to 30 mm diameter. Colour may be pale or strong pink, yellowish, orange or red.

Egg: White, grey, to dark brown; diameter to 30 mm; outer skin smooth or covered with flaky particles; gelatinous interior; with white rhizomorphs at the base. The egg remnants are seen as a whitish to greyish-brown coloured volva at the base of the mature fruiting body's stem. The surface is rough, wrinkled and tough.

Stipe: Cylindrical, tapering slightly at the base; short, may be entirely hidden within the volva or extend beyond it; texture spongy; surface rough or pitted; colour almost white at the base and flushing orange or salmon-pink to red at the top. Hollow, composed of a single ring of tubes that sometimes join together or split.

Arms: 3-4; vertical; to 60 mm long; tapering upwards; joined at first at their tips but sometimes freeing with age, remaining parallel or arching slightly outwards; tips may also be forked slightly; a low ridge runs down the length of the outer face of each arm; surface finely wrinkled across the width; cream-coloured at the base turning to yellow, orange or red at the top; cylindrical in shape, sometimes compressed to appear 3-4 sided; hollow, interior a single tube with a row of smaller tubes towards the outer surface.

Gleba: Thick, slimy, olive-brown drying to almost black. It first fills the space between the arms, later appearing as patches on the inner face of each arm. Smell is foetid, faecal, “a wretched odour”, like “fresh pig manure”.

Spores: 3.5-5.5 x 1.5-2.5 μm , cylindrical, smooth, hyaline or tinted.

Habitat: Grows alone or in groups on the ground in tropical and subtropical rainforests, agricultural areas such as banana plantations, and in parks and gardens – especially in well composted wood chip mulch.

Notes: Joan Cribb: “This species can be found in Brisbane, but is more likely to be seen in Lamington National Park. A particularly fine display of large troops has been seen from time to time on a heap of mulch and a mulched garden at O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse in the area; the powerful faecal odour attracts attention even before sighting the specimens.” *Queensland Naturalist* 43 (1-3) 2005, p. 18.



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