

# Fungi of the Limestone Coast

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.

**Salmon-pink Cauliflower Coral**  
*Ramaria capitata* var. *ochraceosalmonicolor*



This large orange to pink coral fungus has blunt, rounded to flattened tips to its branches. It grows in soil and leaf litter in native woodlands.

**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.

**Hairy Bird's Nest**  
*Nidula niveotomentosa*



This little fungus resembles a bird's nest, complete with 'eggs'. The 'eggs' are spore-packets and are splashed out of the cup by falling 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 was 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.

**Mauve Splitting Waxcap**  
*Porpolomopsis lewellinae*



This beautiful lilac mushroom is one of the Waxcaps, fungi with waxy caps, gills and stems. The cap splits radially as it ages.

**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.

**Stalked Orange Peel Fungus**  
*Sowerbyella rhenana*



The bright orange cups sit on short stalks, unlike the Orange Peel Fungus, *Aleuria aurantia*, which has flatter discs and is stalkless.

## 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.