

Find our fungi! Discovering fungi in the Mallee through citizen science

Fungi are an integral part of the web of life. They form partnerships with 90% of our Australian plants, and help to deliver essential micronutrients which the plants need to thrive.

Fungi help to build healthy soil and protect their host plants from disease. They even help trees 'talk' to each other!

Fungi are a major player in nutrient recycling. They play a critical role in decomposing organic matter, especially wood and leaves. Without fungi, all of our plants would be stunted, and all the wood that has ever fallen would remain because there is nothing to help it rot!

Fungi are vastly under-studied. There are over 50,000 species of fungi in Australia and yet only 24% of them have been described and named. We know even less about their distribution and the health of their populations.

Fungi are susceptible to many of the same threats that affect our native animals and plants – including bushland clearance, disturbance changes (fire and flood), weeds and climate change.

In 2019 we chose 10 species from the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and provided identifying features to help our citizen science community to collect information using iNaturalist. Now in 2022 we have selected 10 more 'target species' that are more likely to be found in our Mallee habitats.

You can look for both groups of target species, but you are more likely to find the original 10 species in the wetter regions and this current 10 species are more likely to be found in the Mallee.



We need your help!

We encourage you to look for these target species and submit records via the Fungimap Australia project on iNaturalist.

For further details on how to do this and what records to submit, please collect a free copy of our 'Find Our Fungi' booklet from your local Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board office or contact 8532 9100.

Jammie Dodger

Cortinarius erythraeus



Image: David Catcheside

Defining Features

- Up to 7 cm across
- Cap is blood red to orange and covered with shiny slime
- Cap edges are smooth and curve inwards
- Gills are attached to the stem
- Stem has cobwebby section which turns tan-brown as the spores stick to it
- Spores are rust brown



June-July

Gill

Dragon Caps*

Entoloma viridomarginatum

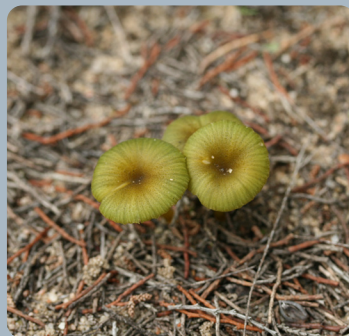


Image: Nicola Barnes

Defining features

- A small mushroom, 2-3 cm across
- Cap is yellow-green to brilliant blue-green
- Pale green gills with dark green edges
- Gills are narrowly attached to the stem (adnate)
- Pink spores



May-Aug

Gill

Orange Funnel*

Austropaxillus infundibuliformis group



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- A large fungus, up to 15 cm wide
- Distinctive funnel shape with exposed gills
- Orange cap, gills and stem
- Rusty brown spores



April-July

Gill

Top things to look for when identifying fungi:

- Shape and colour
- Cap colour and texture
- Spore surface e.g. gills or pores
- Stem e.g. ring present or not
- Stem base e.g. sac present or not
- Habitat area e.g. Mallee, heathy bushes, sandy dunes, swales or low-lying areas and next to water courses or lakes.

Submit online

Upload your photos and information about the target fungi on this identification chart via the Fungimap Australia project on iNaturalist.

inaturalist.org/projects/fungimap-australia



*These species don't have a common name so we've created one.



= Typical fruiting time

Scarlet Bracket

Trametes coccinea group



Image: Nicola Barnes

Defining features

- Large bracket, up to 15 cm across
- Found on dead wood
- Cap is orange and may have concentric rings
- Underside is orange and pored
- Spores are white



Bracket/Polypore

Hairy Bracket

Postia pelliculosa



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Up to 10 cm wide
- Grows on tree trunks and logs
- Top of cap is very hairy
- White sponge appearance underneath (due to fine pores)
- Soft and moist when fresh, and brittle when dry
- White spores



Bracket/Polypore

Small Dung Button

Poronia erici



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Lives on poo!
- Tiny – up to 0.6 cm across
- Creamy white discs with small black holes (where the spores are released)



Discs/Cups

Fleshy ground cup

Aleurina ferruginea



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Tiny – up to 1 cm wide
- Small fleshy orange discs or cups, often with olive-green tinge
- Found on and under thick leaf litter



Discs/Cups

Beaked Earthstar

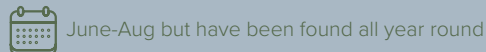
Geastrum pectinatum



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Up to 5 cm across
- Spore sac is round or flattened-round and is raised on a narrow stem
- Opening of the spore sac is 'beaked'
- Underside of the spore sac has a circular pattern of grooves
- The spore sac sits on 7-10 rays. The tips of the rays are attached to a base resembling half an egg-shell
- Spores are brown



Compared to the Arched Earthstar – the Beaked Earthstar **has a narrow stem** between the spore sack and the 'legs' underneath.

Earthstars and puffballs

Arched Earthstar

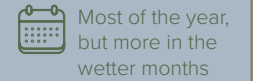
Geastrum fornicatum



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Up to 6 cm across
- Looks like a ball on stilts!
- Spore 'sac' is round or flattened-round with an opening at the top
- The spore sac sits on 4-5 rays. The tips of the rays are attached to a base resembling half an egg-shell.
- Spores are brown



Compared with the Beaked Earthstar – the Arched Earthstar **has a very short, wide stem**, and there is no beak on the spore sac

Earthstars and puffballs

Sandy Stilt-Puffball

Battarrea phalloides



Image: David Catcheside

Defining features

- Large stalked puffball – up to 40 cm tall!
- Looks superficially like a mushroom, but the spores are on the top of the cap (initially covered with a dome-shaped lid)
- Stem is long and looks scaly and fibrous
- Spores are brown



Earthstars and puffballs