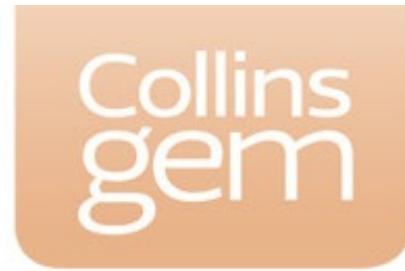


# Mushrooms







# Mushrooms





Collins  
gem

**Mushrooms & Toadstools**

**Patrick Harding**

Photographs by Alan Outen

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## Introduction

Mushrooms and toadstools belong to the fungal kingdom. There are about 4,000 species of larger fungi in Britain. Of the larger umbrella-shaped fungi with a cap and stem, mushroom is a popular term for those that are edible; toadstool for those that are poisonous.

A fungus is not a plant. Most plants make food using the sun's energy. Animals and fungi need a food source, usually plant or animal, living or dead. Animals digest food internally. In fungi enzymes dissolve the food externally from where it is absorbed.

Plants and animals are made up of many tiny cells, but mushrooms and toadstools are composed of very thin tubes known as hyphae. As a hypha grows it branches and produces a web of threads known as a mycelium. This is the equivalent of stems, roots and leaves in a plant. On a flat surface it often grows as an expanding disc and this shape is clearly seen in simple fungi such as moulds on food.

Unlike moulds, mushrooms and toadstools reproduce by forming spores in large fruitbodies. These are the structures that are described in this book and frequently the rest of the fungus is hidden from view. A fruitbody may only exist for a few days before rotting away but the mycelium which produces it may live for years and some individuals are known to be hundreds of years old.

## Where do fungi grow?

Many species described in this book are found among short mown or grazed grass. Such fungi feed on dead plant or animal material present in the soil. Undisturbed pasture that has not been ploughed or had chemical fertilisers applied is usually much richer in fungi than reseeded grass which has been limed and fertilised.

Lawns and playing fields are often carefully prepared, with the soil being riddled to remove stones and as such provide perfect sites for the growth of ‘fairy rings’ - the appearance of a ring of fruitbodies. In the past these were explained away by references to toads or fairies but they result from fruitbodies being produced at the growing edge of the buried mycelium which under uniform soil conditions grows as a circular disc. As the mycelium grows so the size of the circle increases.

Grazed grassland attracts species of fungi that feed on dung. Horse and cow dung is especially rich in fungi though many have small fruitbodies. Larger species include Dung Roundhead and Egg-shell Toadstool.

Woodlands are home to a wide range of fungi. In addition to species growing in woodland soil there are those that rot tree leaves (including conifer needles), those that rot fallen wood and old stumps and those that feed on living trees. Of the latter some enter as germinating spores through a wound and the mycelium spreads before producing bracket-like fruitbodies from the trunk. Others invade via the tree roots and form a web or mycorrhiza (fungus root). Such fungi draw food from tree roots but produce terrestrial fruitbodies though some (e.g. truffles) produce them underground.

Many fungi are restricted to one or a small number of tree species. Jelly Antler Fungus grows on pine stumps and also on spruce. Hen of the Woods is only found at the base of oak trees. Mycorrhizal species are especially host specific and their names often relate to this, e.g. Brown Birch Bolete and Beechwood Sickener. Some tree species have a large number of associated species of fungi and among those with the most are oak, beech, birch and Scots pine.

Other habitats include gardens and parks. More specific places include cellars, wood stacks, old bonfire sites and manure heaps. Some fungi, e.g. Ergot, grow from grass flowers while others emerge from the bodies of animals they have killed.

## **Edible and Poisonous Fungi**

Many edible fungi have ‘lookalikes’ which may be poisonous. This is even true for the Field Mushroom, the most commonly consumed wild fungus in Britain. Beginners must on no account gather wild fungi to eat unless they have been correctly identified by an expert. Before eating wild fungi consult How to Identify Edible Mushrooms by Harding, Lyon and Tomblin, published by HarperCollins.

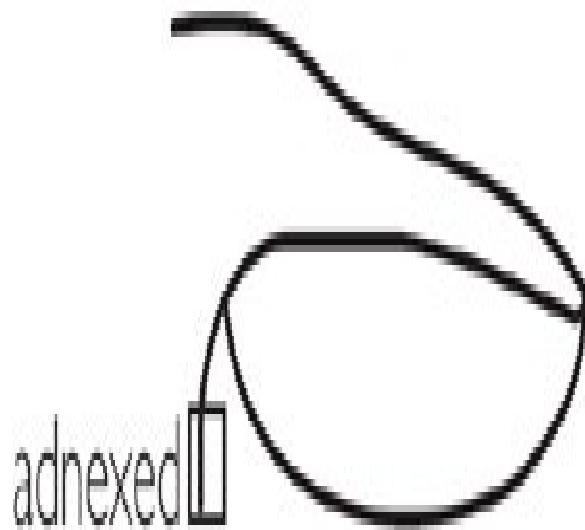
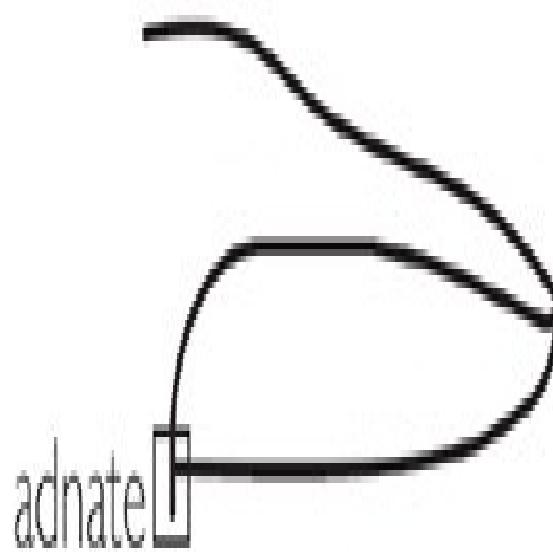
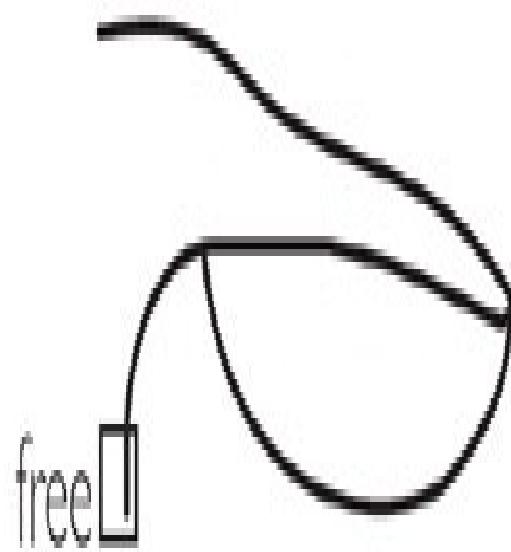
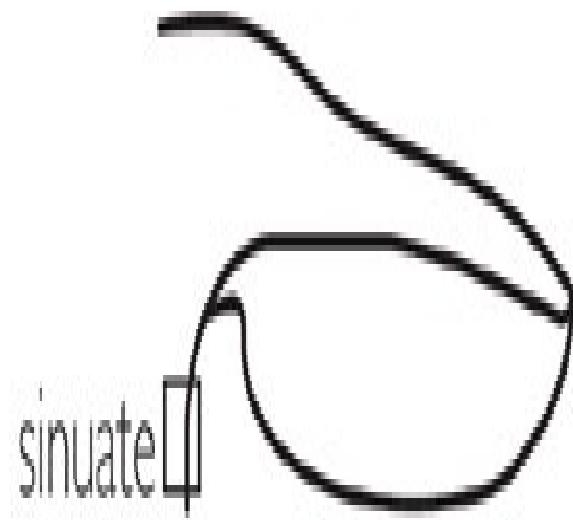
## Collecting and identifying fungi

Some fungi cannot be identified without a microscope but most of the species in this book can be named using macro characters. Collect the whole fungus (using a knife if necessary) and place in a basket. Fragile species are best put in small boxes. Make notes about habitat, e.g. ‘growing on a stump’ or ‘under birch’ and remember that a slimy texture or faint smell may dry or fade.

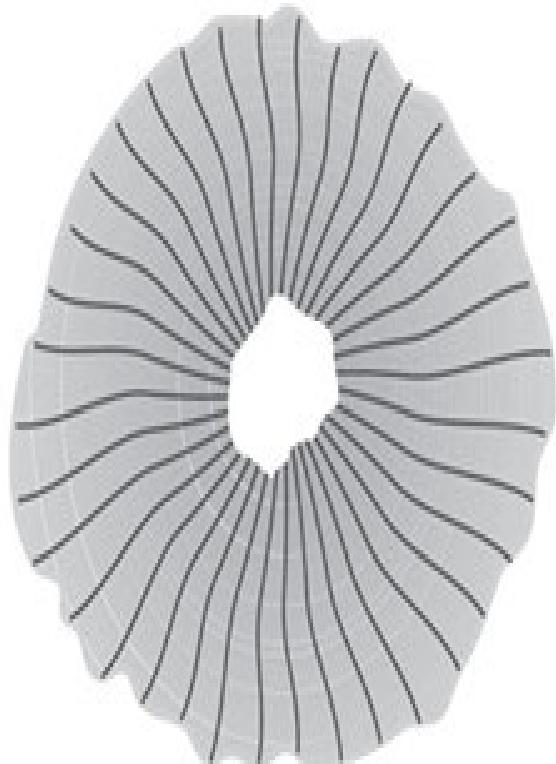
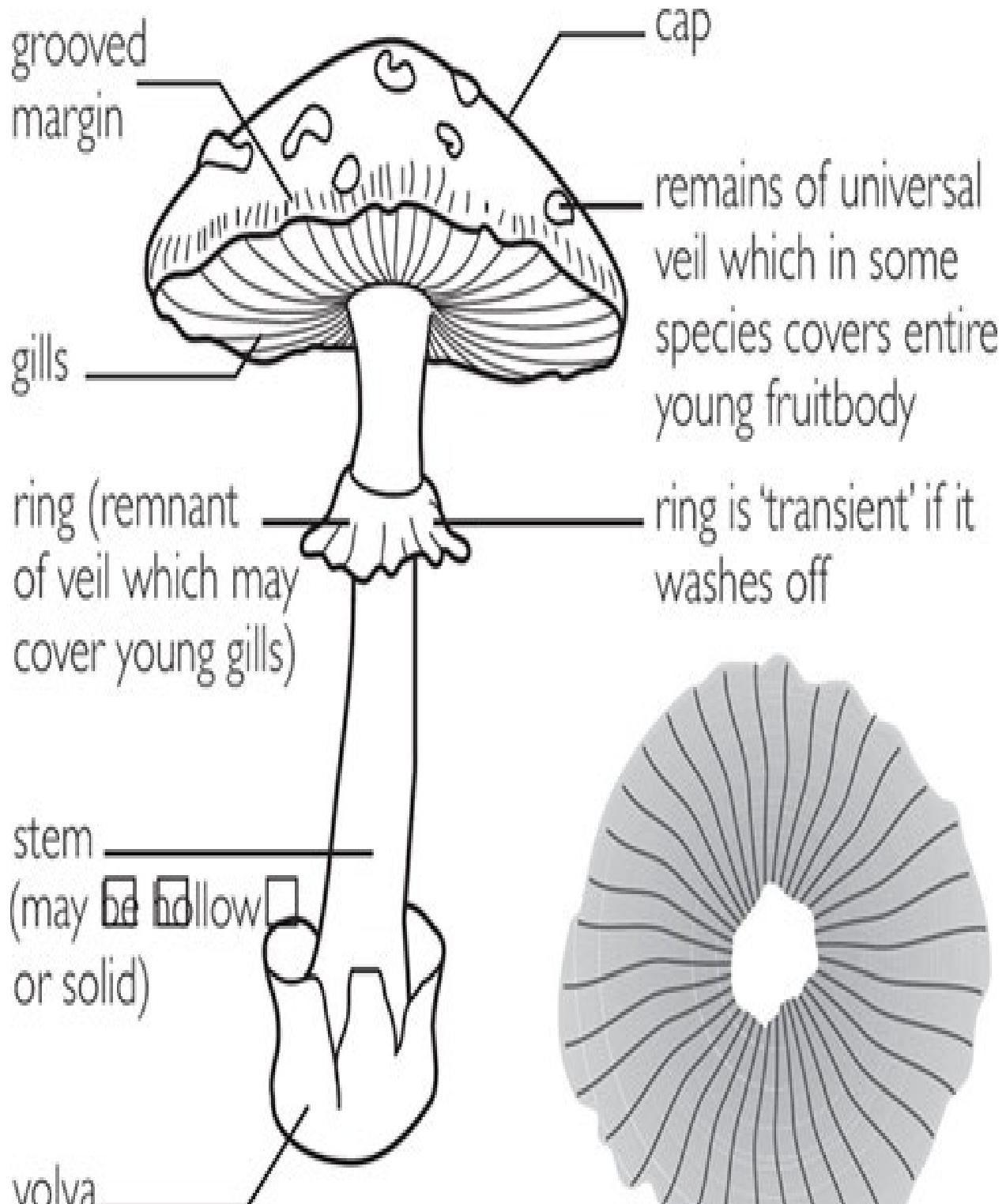
In this book descriptions concentrate on characters of the fruitbody, including colour (which is very variable), shape (which often changes as the fruitbody matures - nb a raised central region is known as an umbo), smell and texture. Most species are umbrella- or mushroom-shaped and have gills on the cap underside, like shop mushrooms.

Gill characters are important, especially the way they are attached to the stem. This is best seen by slicing the cap in half.

### **Gill Characteristics**



A spore print (the colour of a mass of spores) is very important for accurate identification. Remove stem and put the cap gills (or tubes) down on a piece of glass. Cover to keep moist and leave for at least 4 hours, after which there be a white or coloured deposit.



Spore print

## **Species entries**

The information provided is arranged as follows:

- A symbol – see Introduction for explanation
- The Family or group to which the species belongs.
- The Spore Colour of the species.
- The English Name of the species. In some cases where there is more than one English name in common usage an alternative is mentioned.
- The Latin Name of the species. As with flowering plants this binomial is printed in italics. The first part of the name is the genus to which it belongs. The second part is the species name. As with other organisms Latin names can change, especially as modern research improves our knowledge of the relationship between species. Where there have been recent changes the former Latin name is also given.
  
- The main paragraph gives background details and lists the most important features to aid identification. Features are described in order: cap, gills (where present) and stem. Features that cannot be shown in the photograph such as texture and smell are also listed here.

**SIZE** This gives the normal range. The measures are (usually) for cap diameter, stem height and stem width.

**HABITAT** An important section as some fungi are only found in very restricted habitats.

**SEASON** This gives the usual fruiting season but remember that unusual weather conditions may cause fruitbodies to appear at odd times.

**POISONOUS** Edible, Inedible, Poisonous (red = Very poisonous) An indication of possible culinary use is given but beginners should avoid gathering and eating wild fungi without an expert having identified them first.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** This section includes both closely related species (usually in the same genus) and species which look similar and may confuse a beginner.

## **Key to species illustrated in the book**

At each number there is a range of alternative descriptions - choose that which most closely fits your specimen. This will direct you to the next key stage or to a page number.

### **1 FRUITBODY SHAPE**

**a Grows on wood like a crust, shelf or bracket with no stem or a laterally attached stem**

**b Finger, club, antler or coral shape**

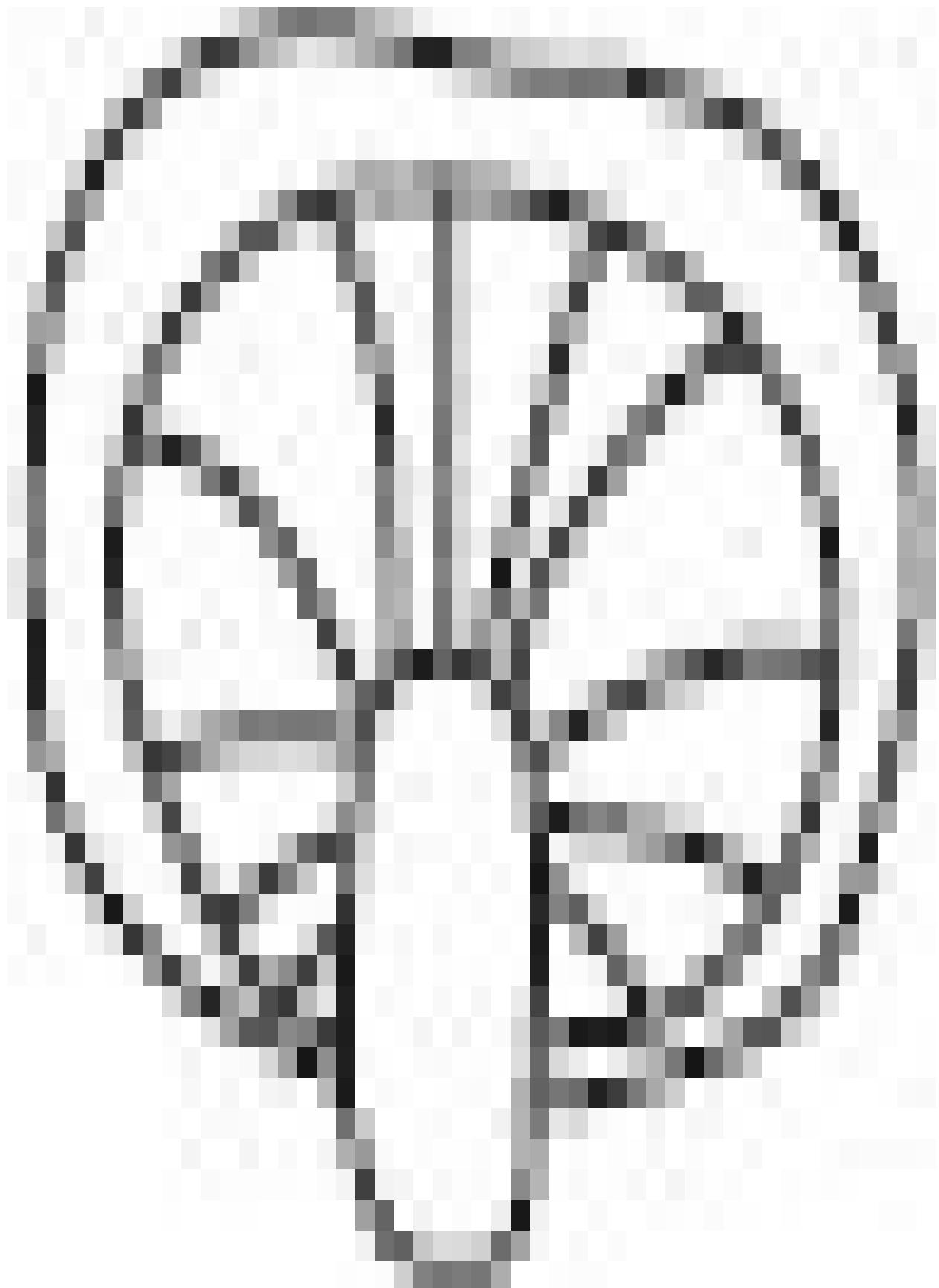
**c Spherical, star or nest shape**

**d Ear, saddle, brain or cauliflower shape**

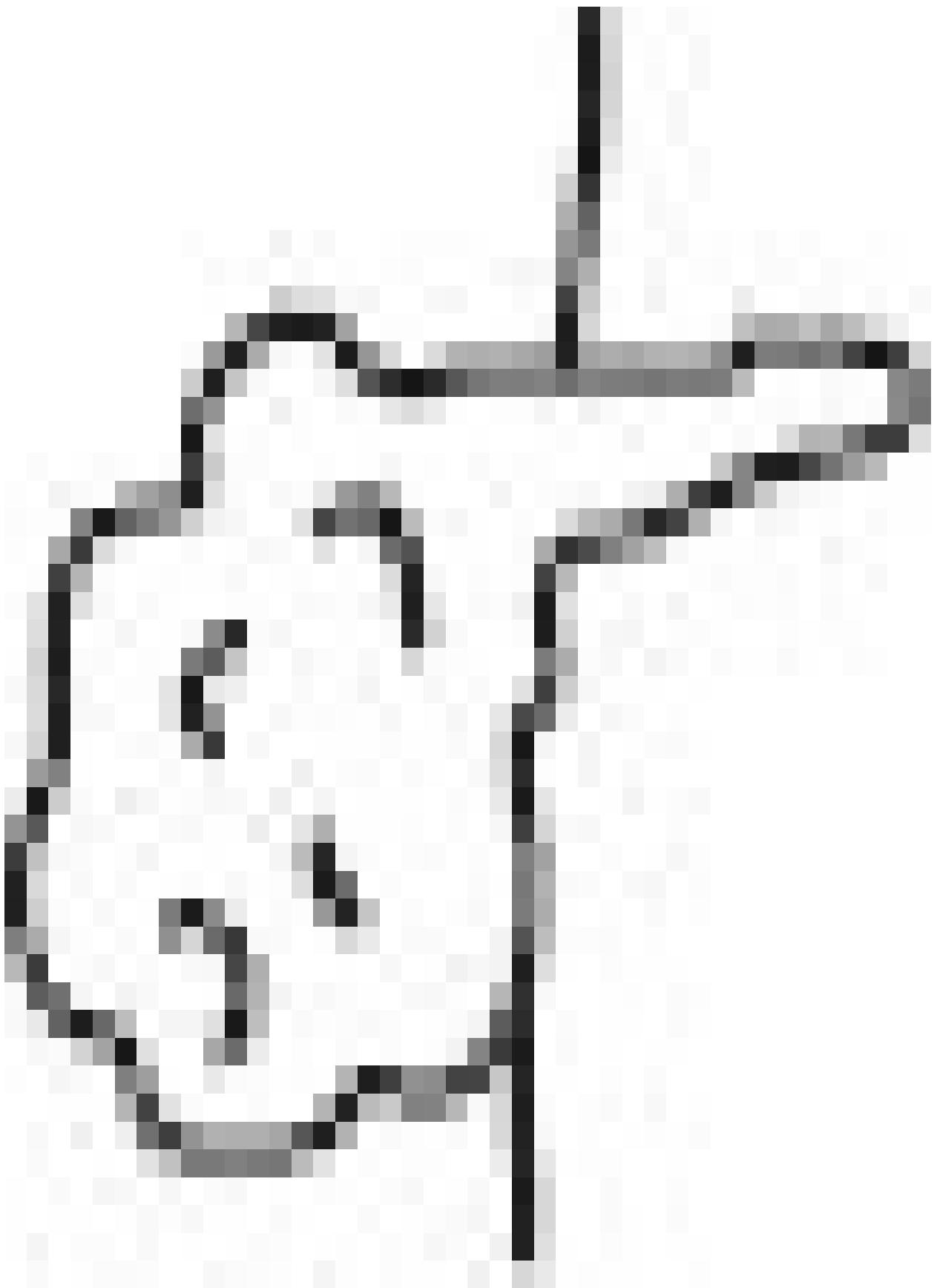
**e Disc, saucer or cup shape**

**f Umbrella shape with cap and central stem**

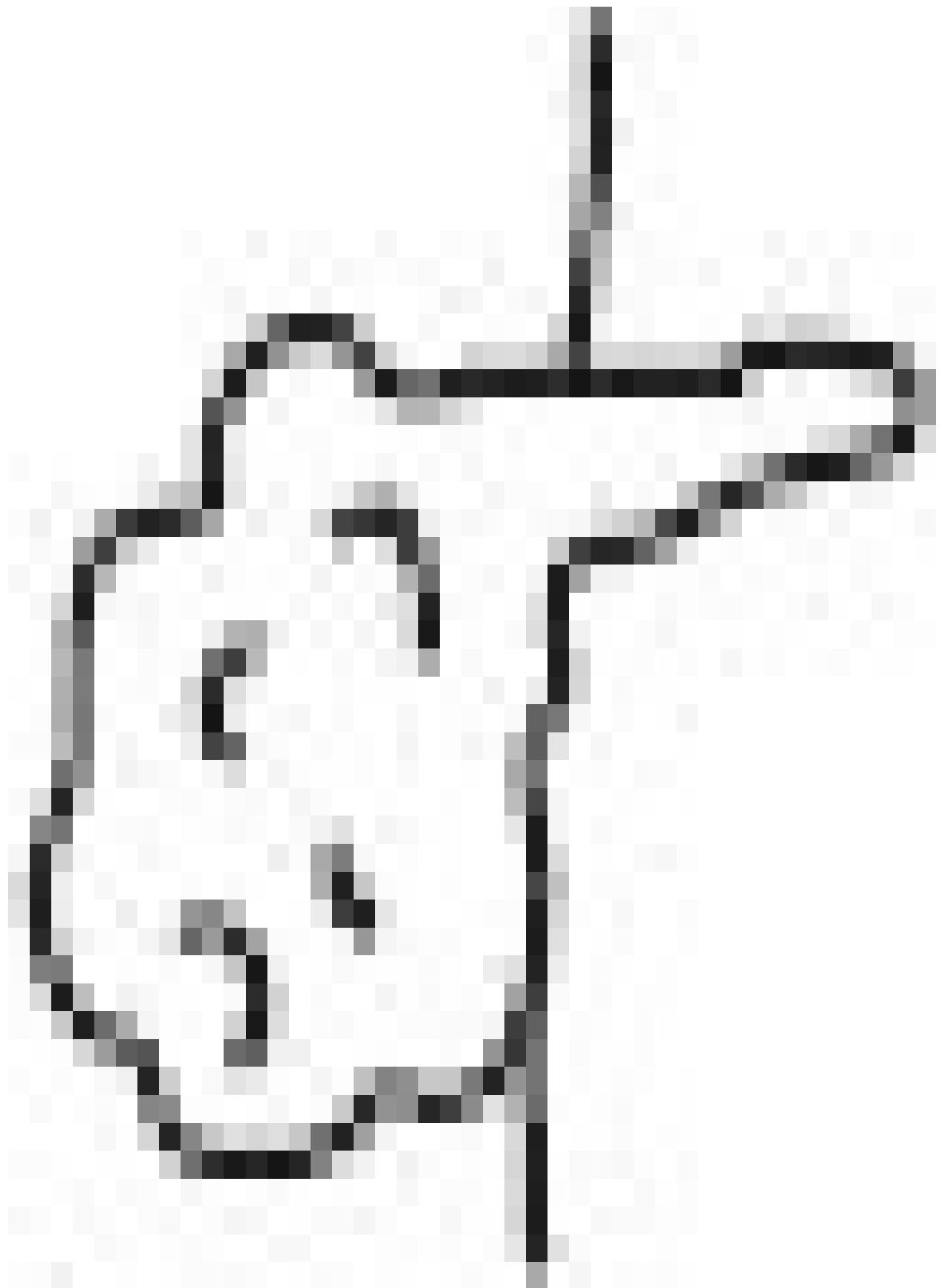
### **2 CRUST, SHELF OR BRACKET-LIKE**



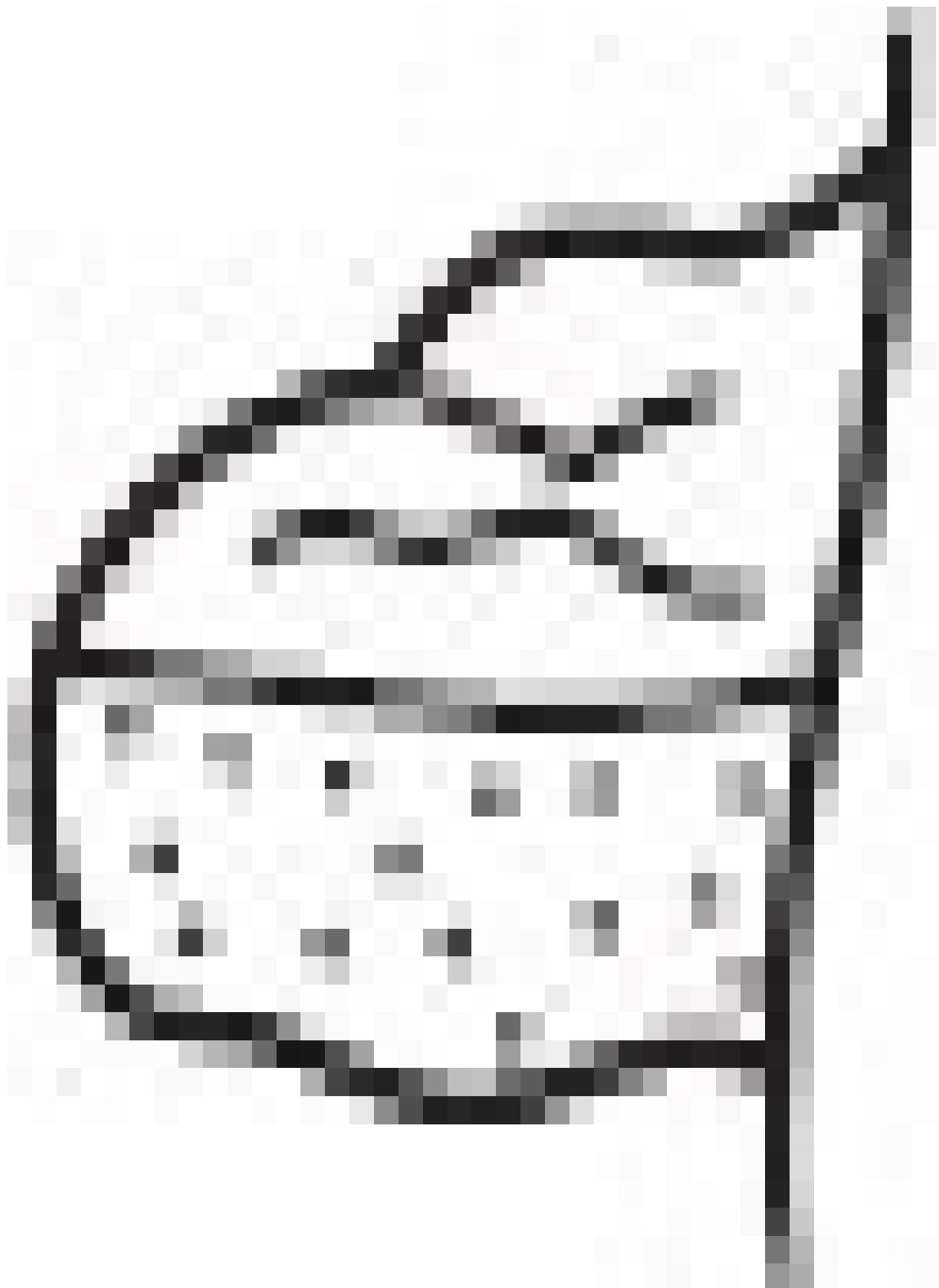
**a Gills on the underside**



**b Smooth underside; bracket < 7cm across, < 1cm thick**

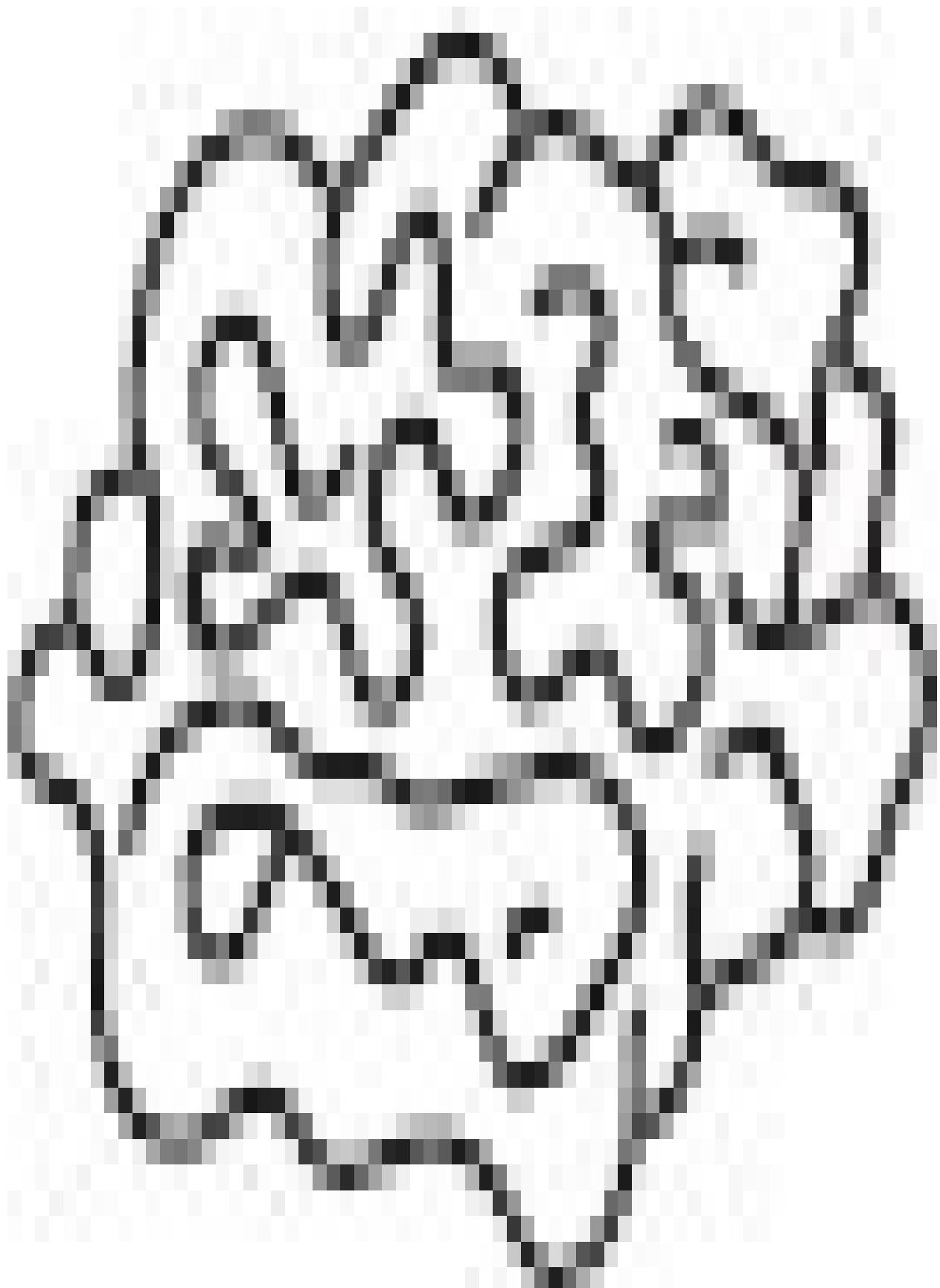


**c Tiny pores or folds underneath; bracket < 7cm across, < 1cm thick**



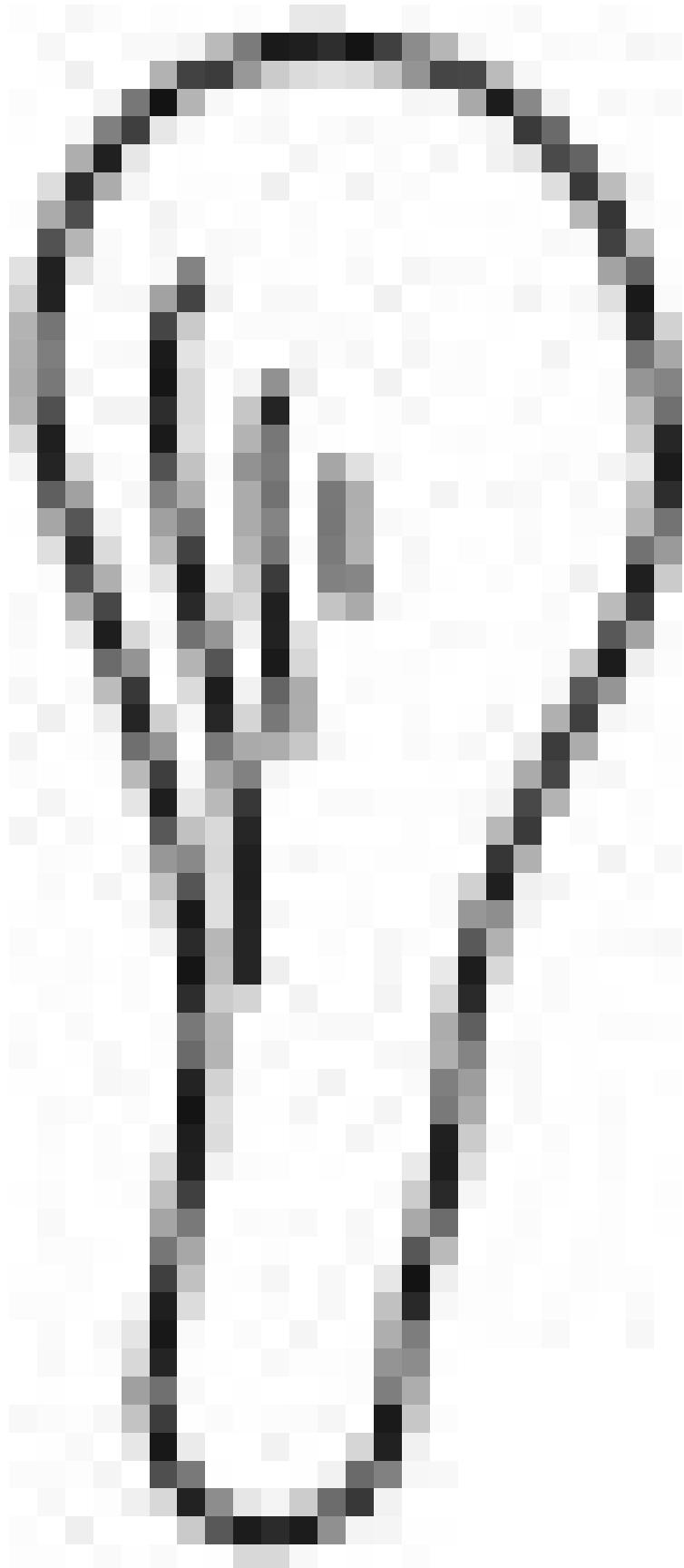
**d Round, angular or slit-like pores; bracket >7cm across, >1cm thick**

**3 FINGER, CLUB, ANTLER OR CORAL SHAPE**



**a Jelly-like texture**

**b Brittle or hard texture**



**c Unbranched, finger or club shape**

**1 Brittle texture**

**2 Hard texture**

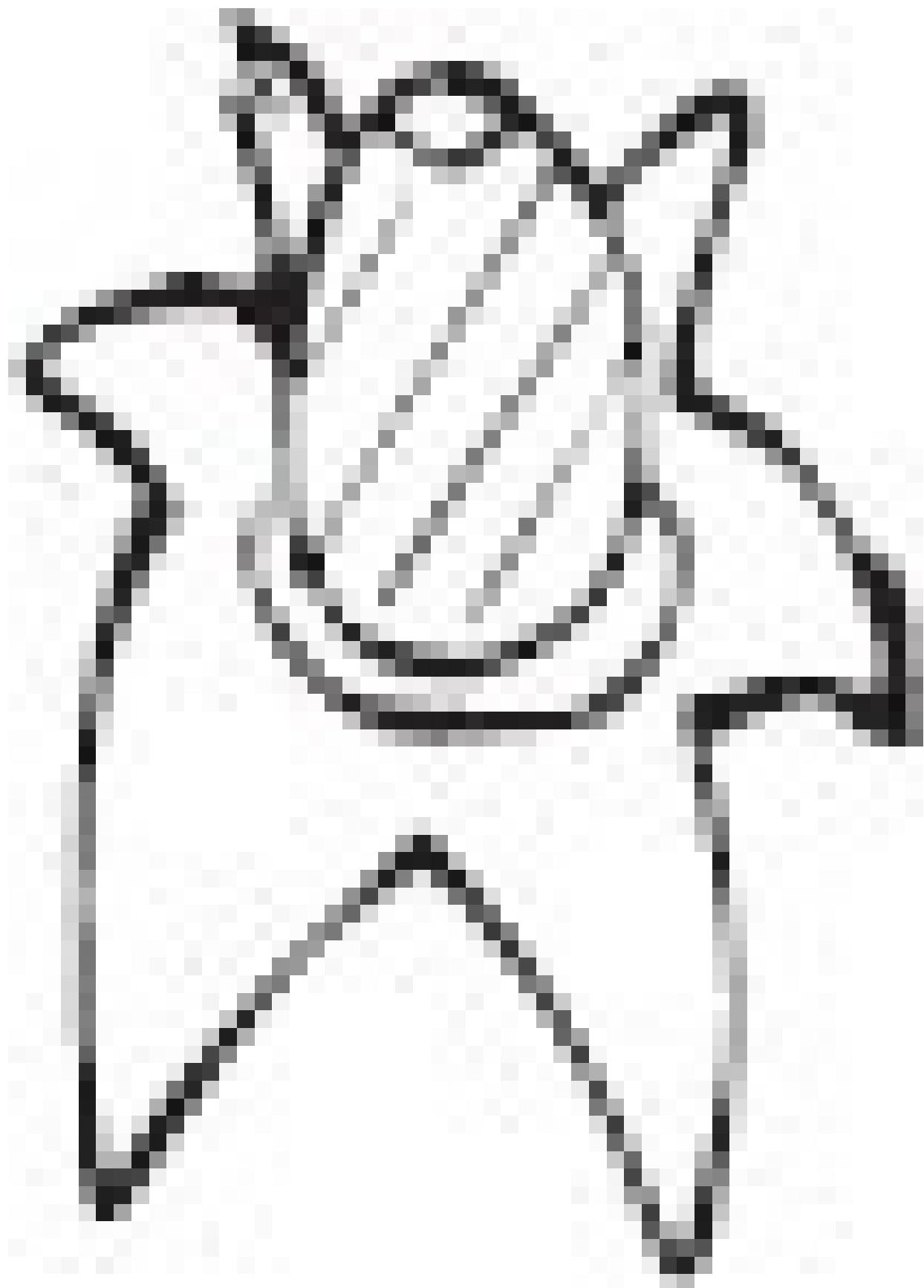


**d Branched, antler or coral shape**

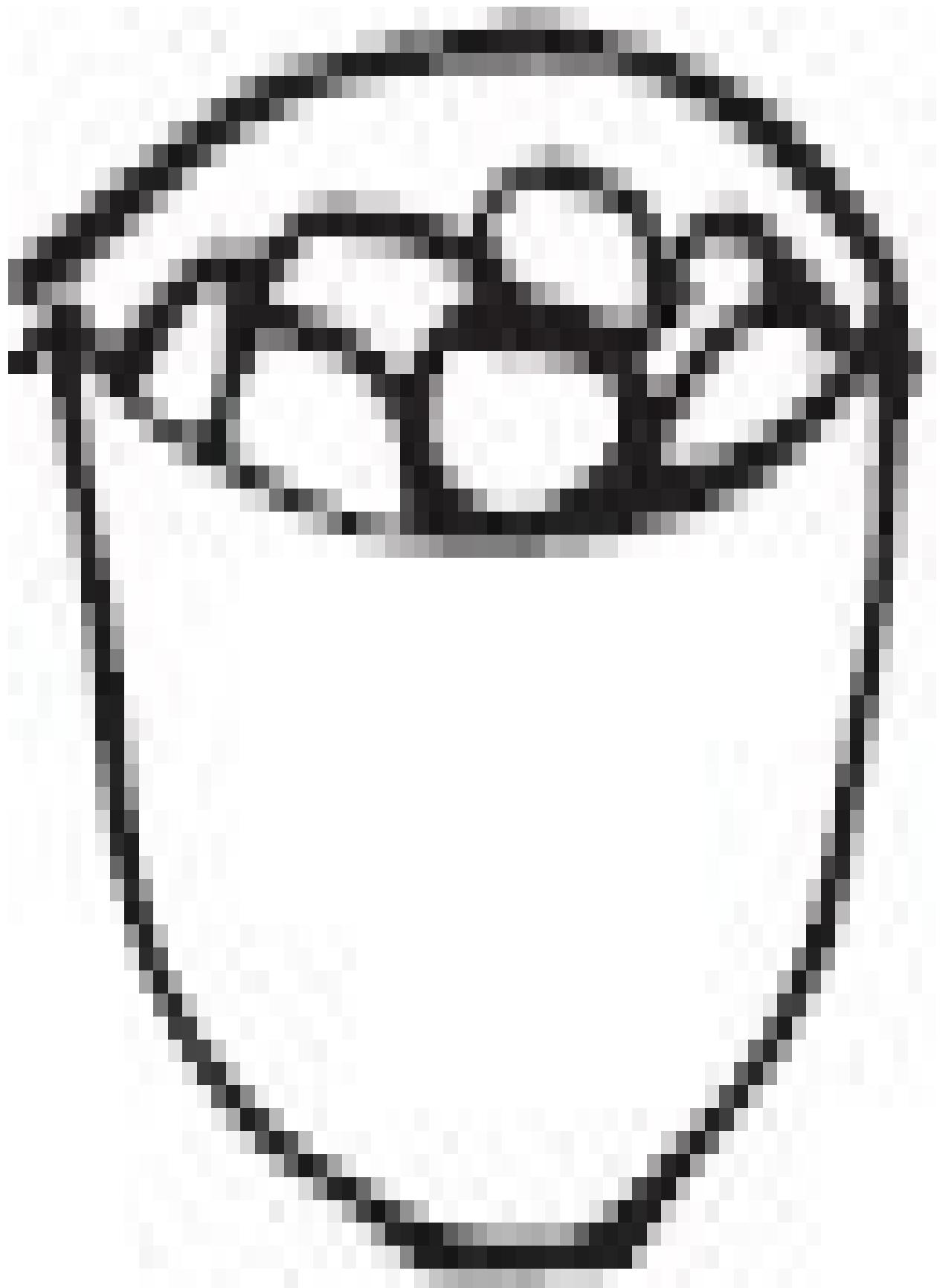
**1 Brittle texture**

**2 Hard texture**

**4 SPHERICAL, STAR OR NEST SHAPE**



**a Skin peeling back, star-like**



**b Nest-like with tiny ‘eggs’**

**c Spherical; > 1.5 cm diameter**

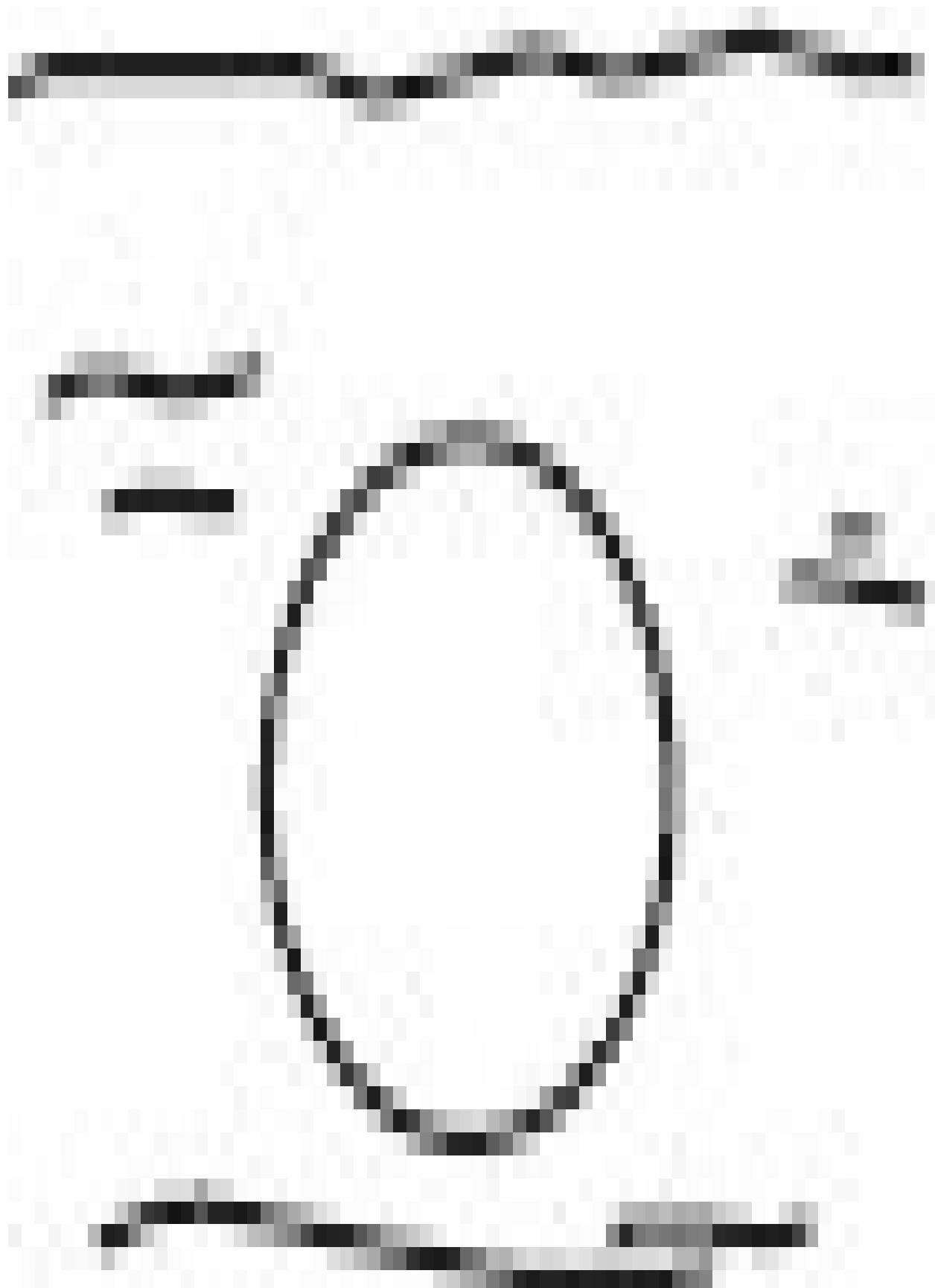


**1 Growing on birch, tough, white**

**2 Thin skin, white flesh**

**3 Thick skin, dark flesh**

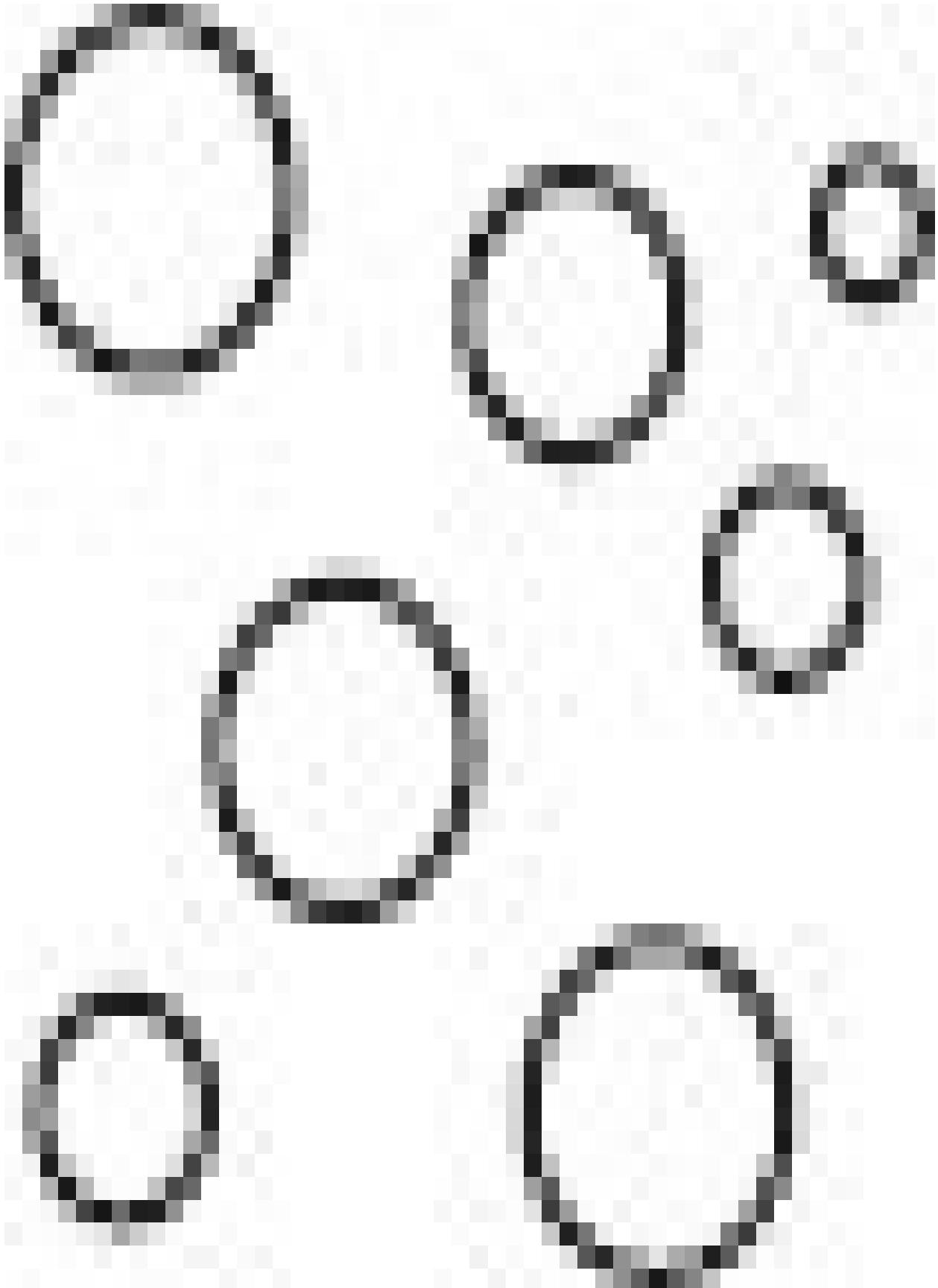
**4 Jelly layer below skin**



## **5 Underground fruitbody**

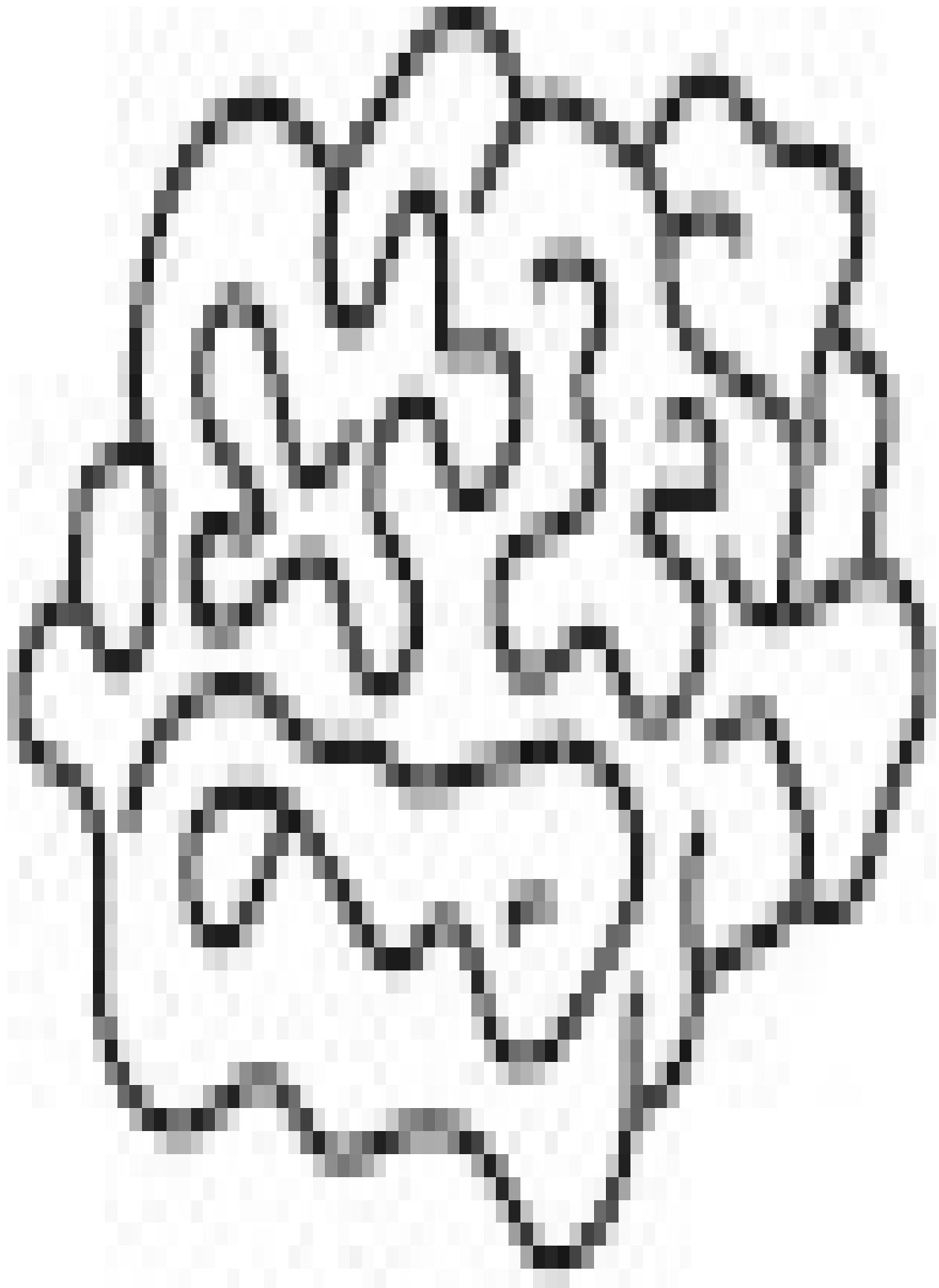


**6 On trees, hard, brown-black**



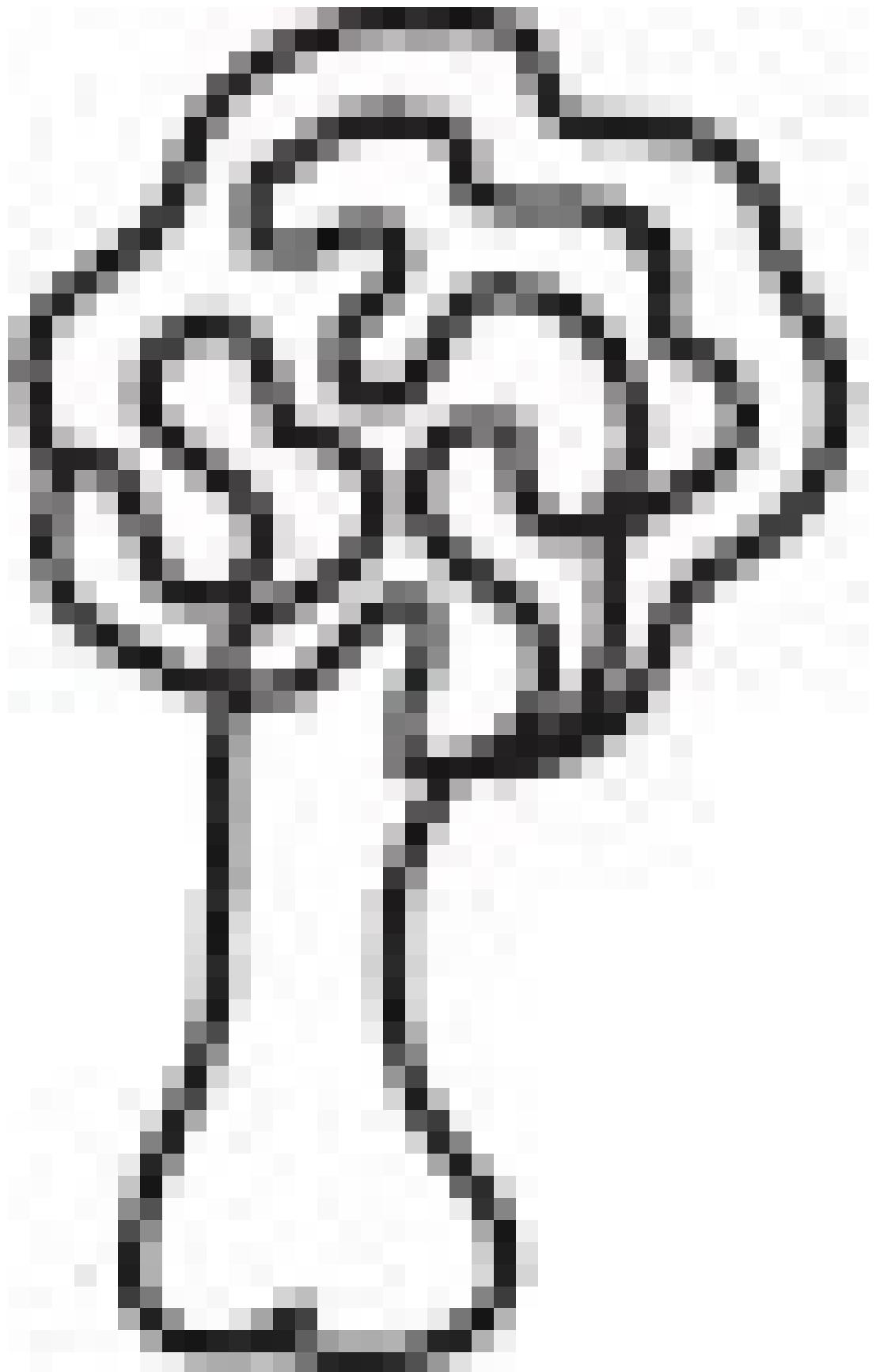
**d Spherical; < 0.5cm diameter**

**5 EAR, SADDLE OR BRAIN SHAPE**



**a Ear shape (jelly-like)**

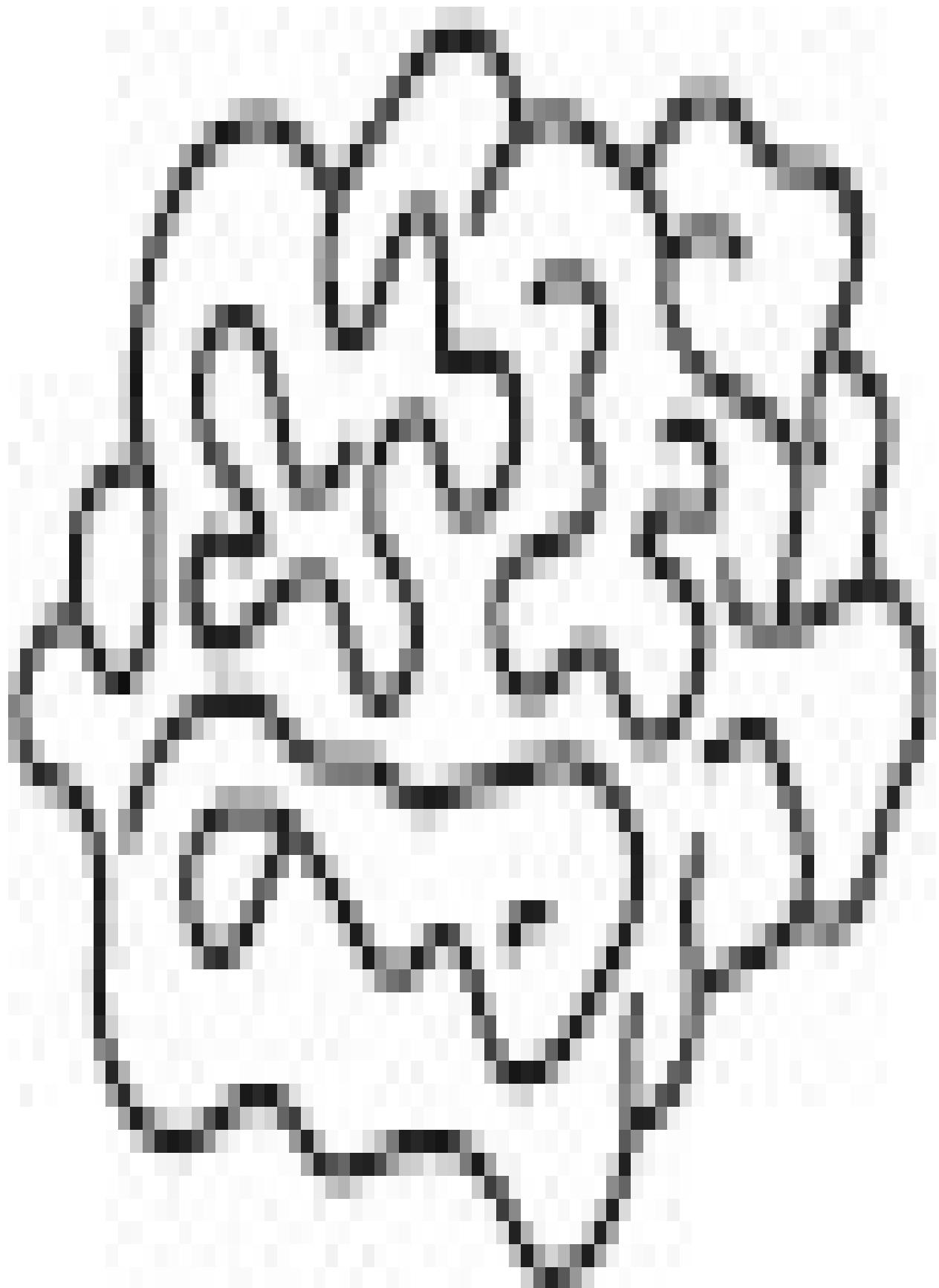
**b Brain shape (jelly-like)**



**c Brain shape (dry texture)**

**d Saddle shape (dry texture)**

## **6 DISC, SAUCER OR CUP SHAPE**

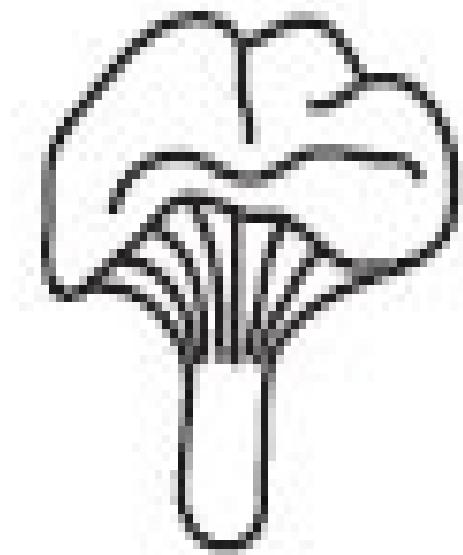
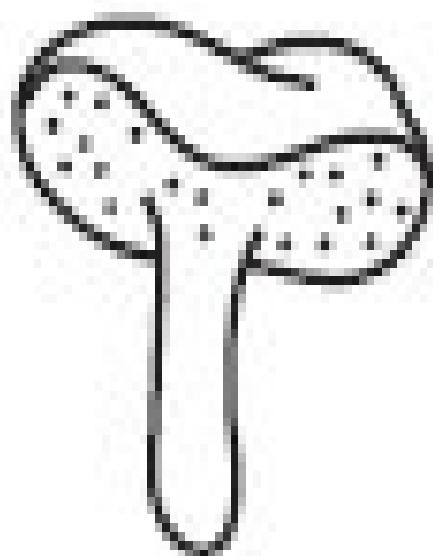


**a Jelly-like texture**



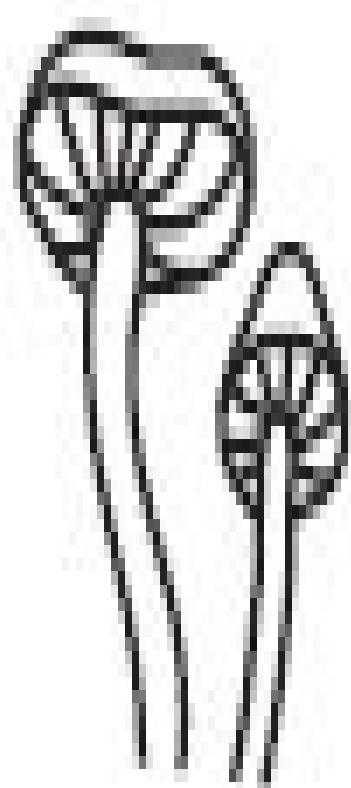
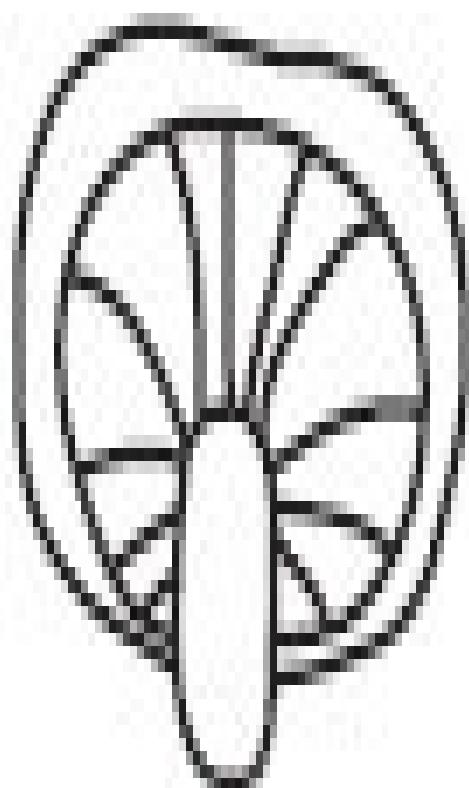
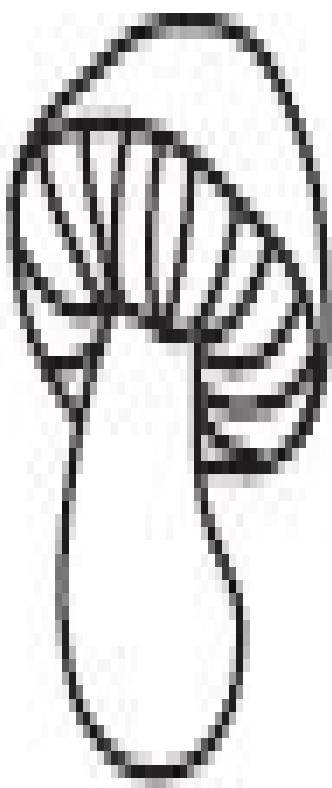
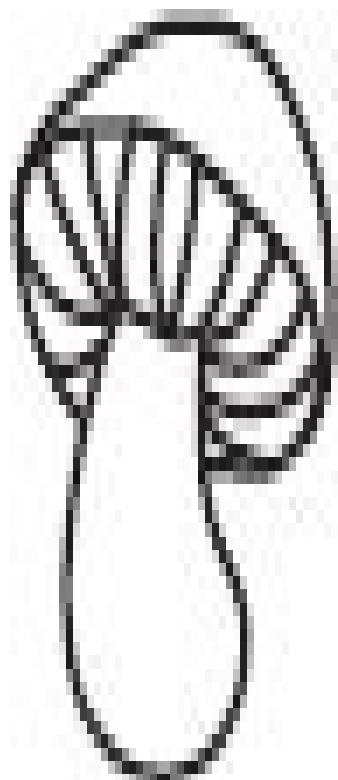
**b Dry texture**

**7 UMBRELLA SHAPE WITH CENTRALLY ATTACHED STEM CAP  
WITH:**



- a Teeth on underside**
- b Pores on underside**
- c Smooth or wrinkled underside**
- d Gills on underside**

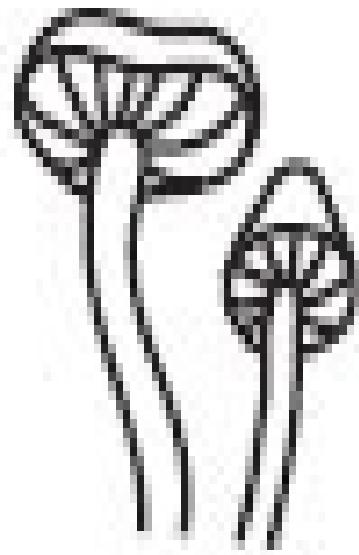
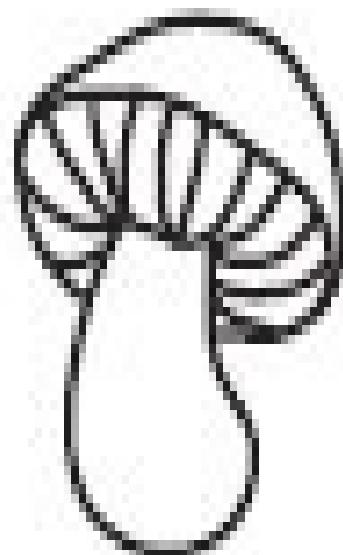
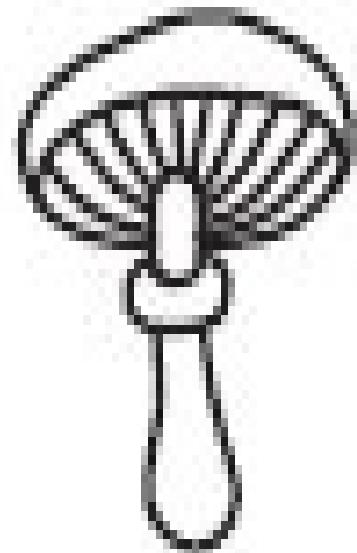
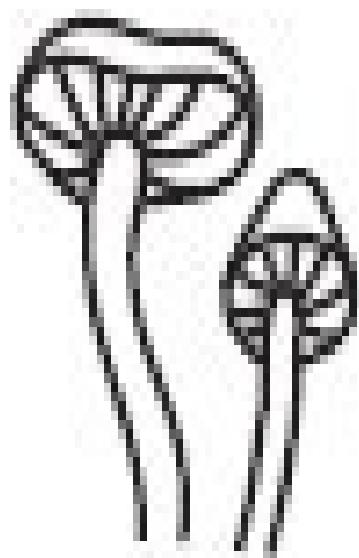
## **8 MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS WITH GILLS SPORE COLOUR:**



**a Pink**

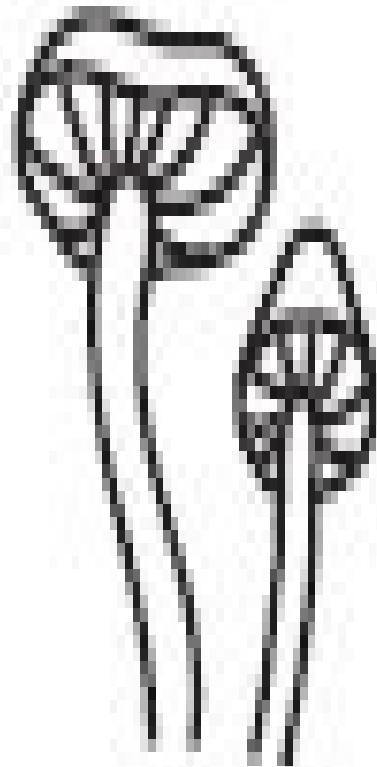
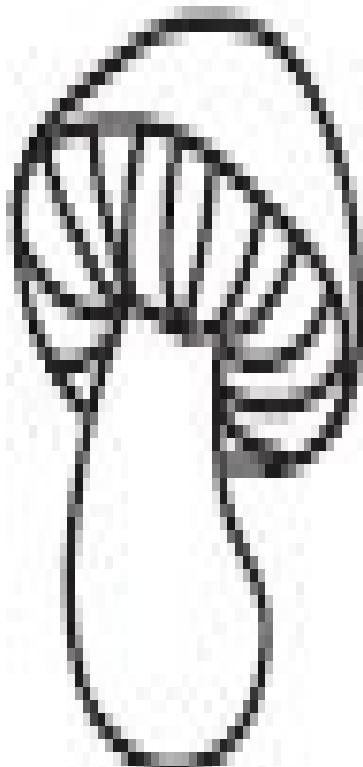
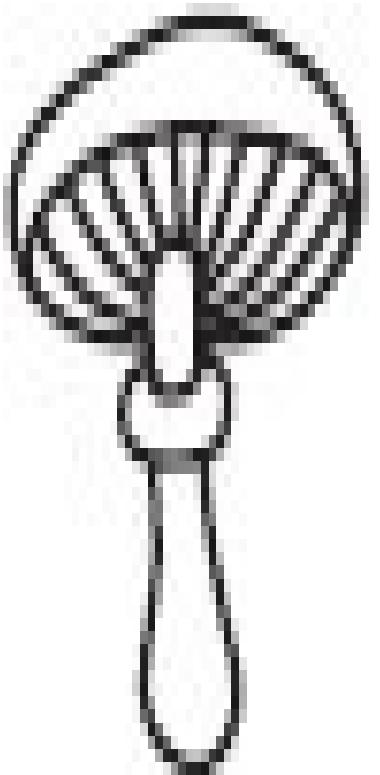
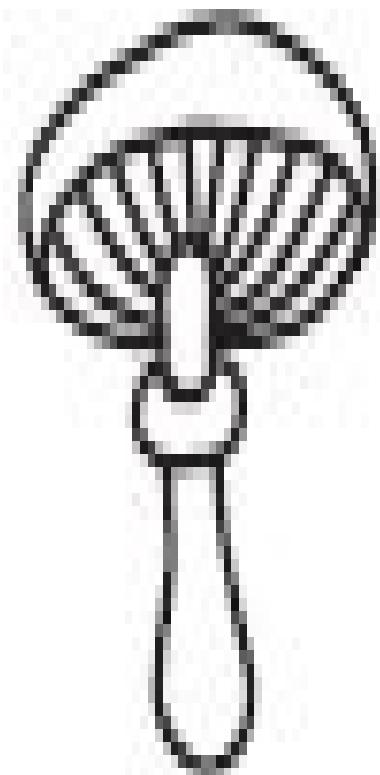
**1 Gills free, on rotting wood**

**2 Gills not free**



**b Brown**

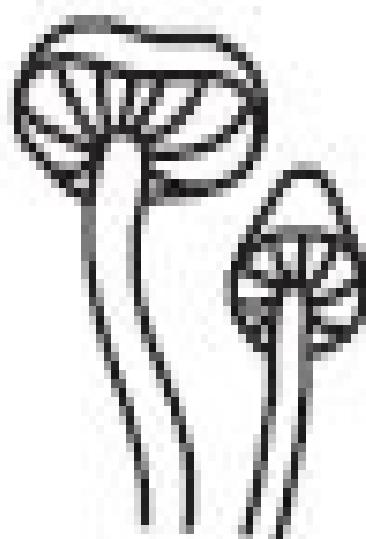
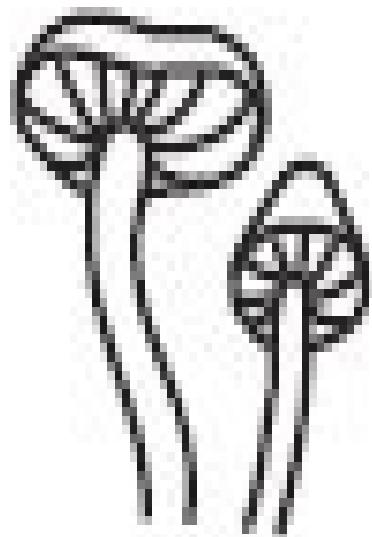
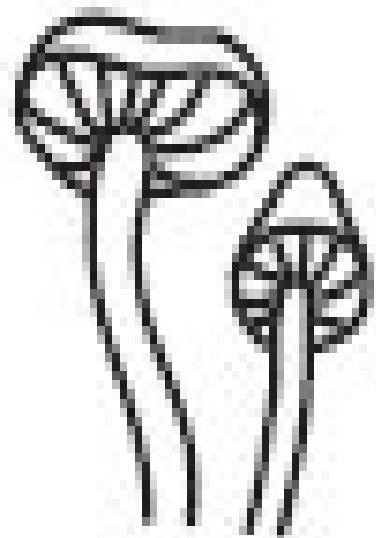
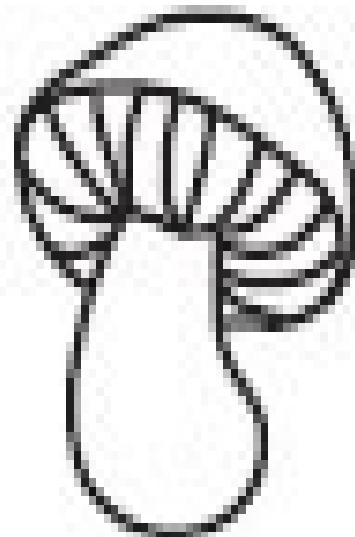
- 1 In grass, small and fragile**
- 2 In grass, medium sized, with ring**
- 3 Woodland species**



**c Brown**

**1 Gills free**

**2 Gills not free**



**d Black**

**1 Inky fluid from old gills**

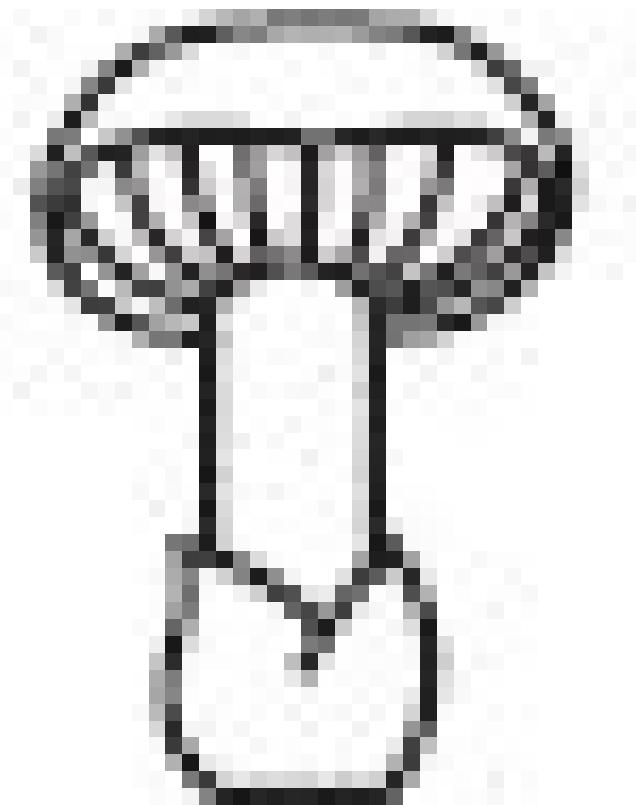
**2 No inky fluid, plain gills**

**3 No inky fluid, mottled gills**

**e White (or very pale colour)**

**9 MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS WITH WHITE SPORES**

(including white, cream and pale yellow spots)



**a Gills free**

**1 Volva at stem base**

**2 No volva, ring on stem**

Gills not free

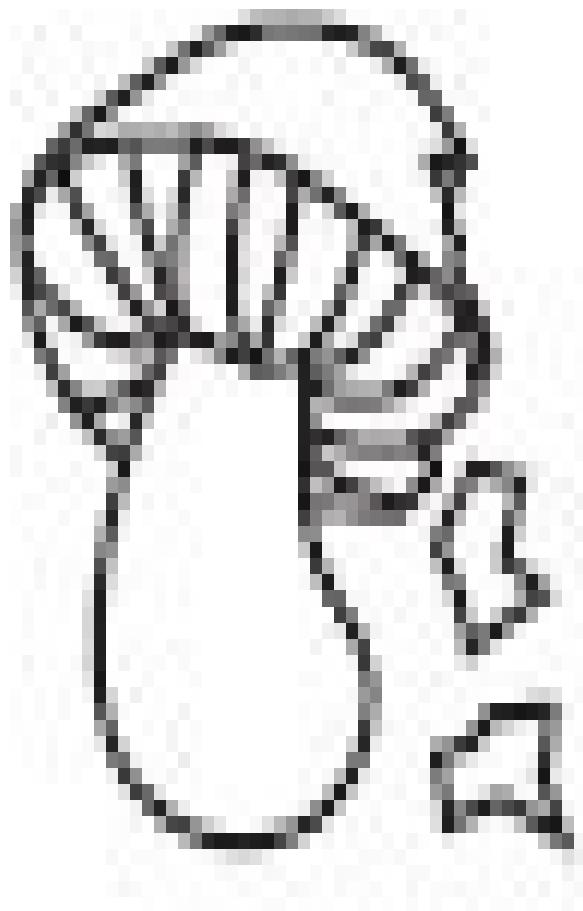


**b Gills thick, waxy, mostly in grass**

Gills not thick and waxy

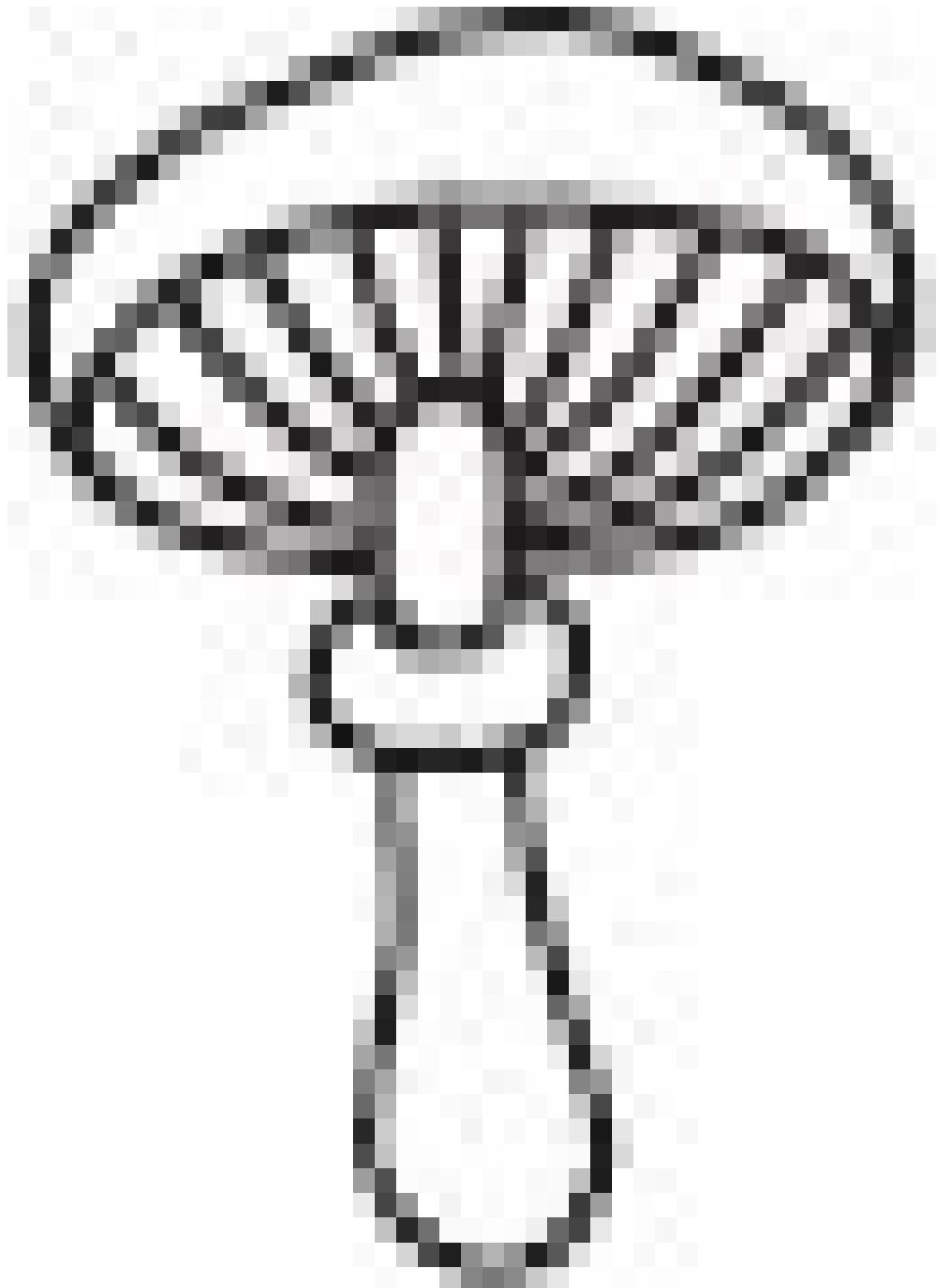
**c Fruitbody easily crumbled, woodland spp**

Fruitbody not easily crumbled



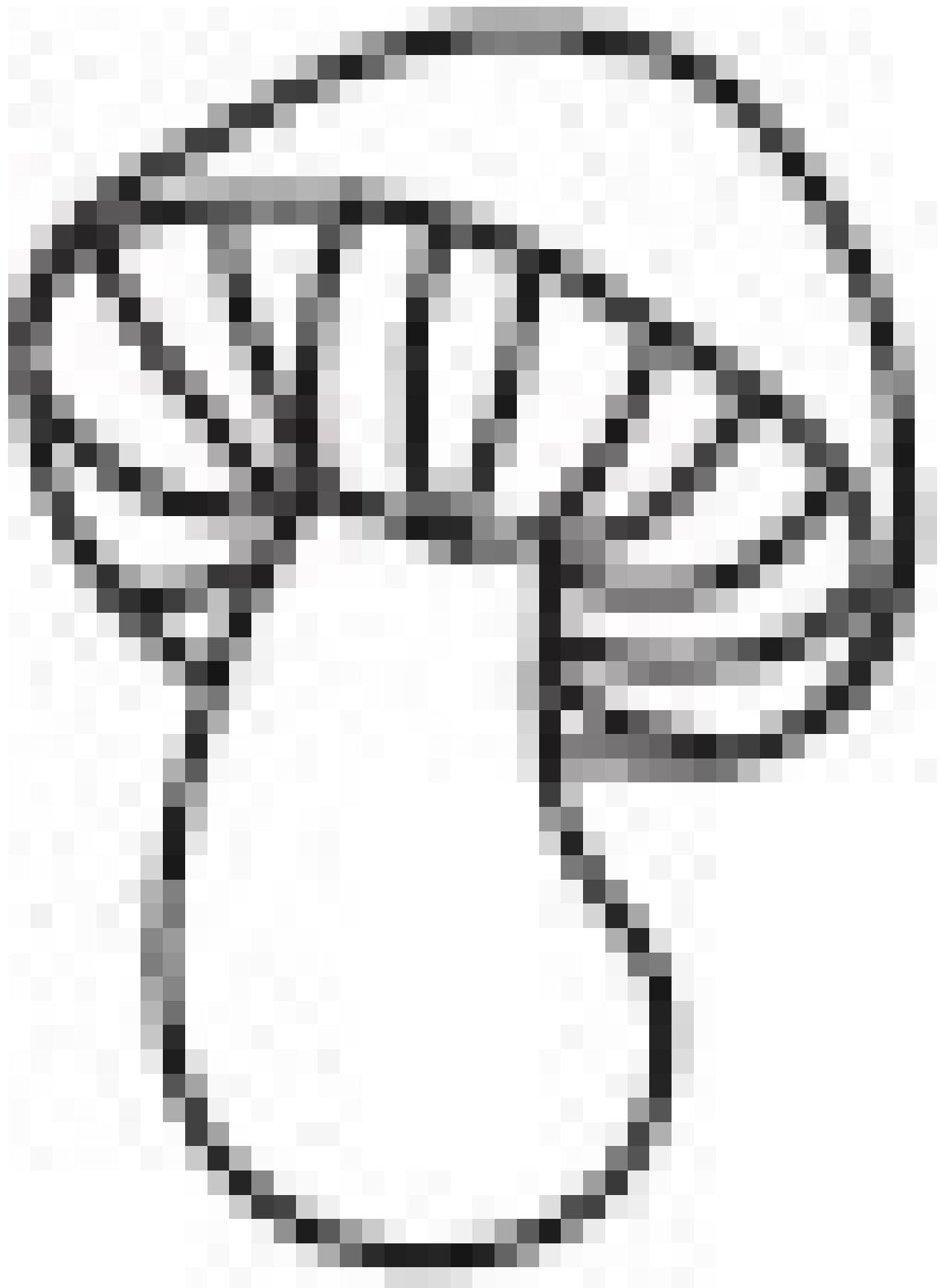
**d No milky fluid from damaged gills**

Damaged gills exude milky fluid



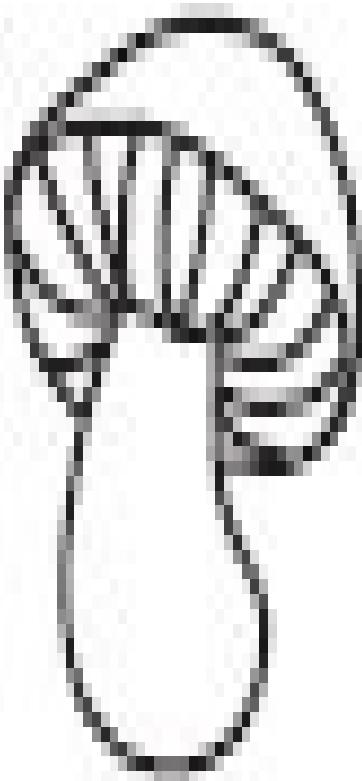
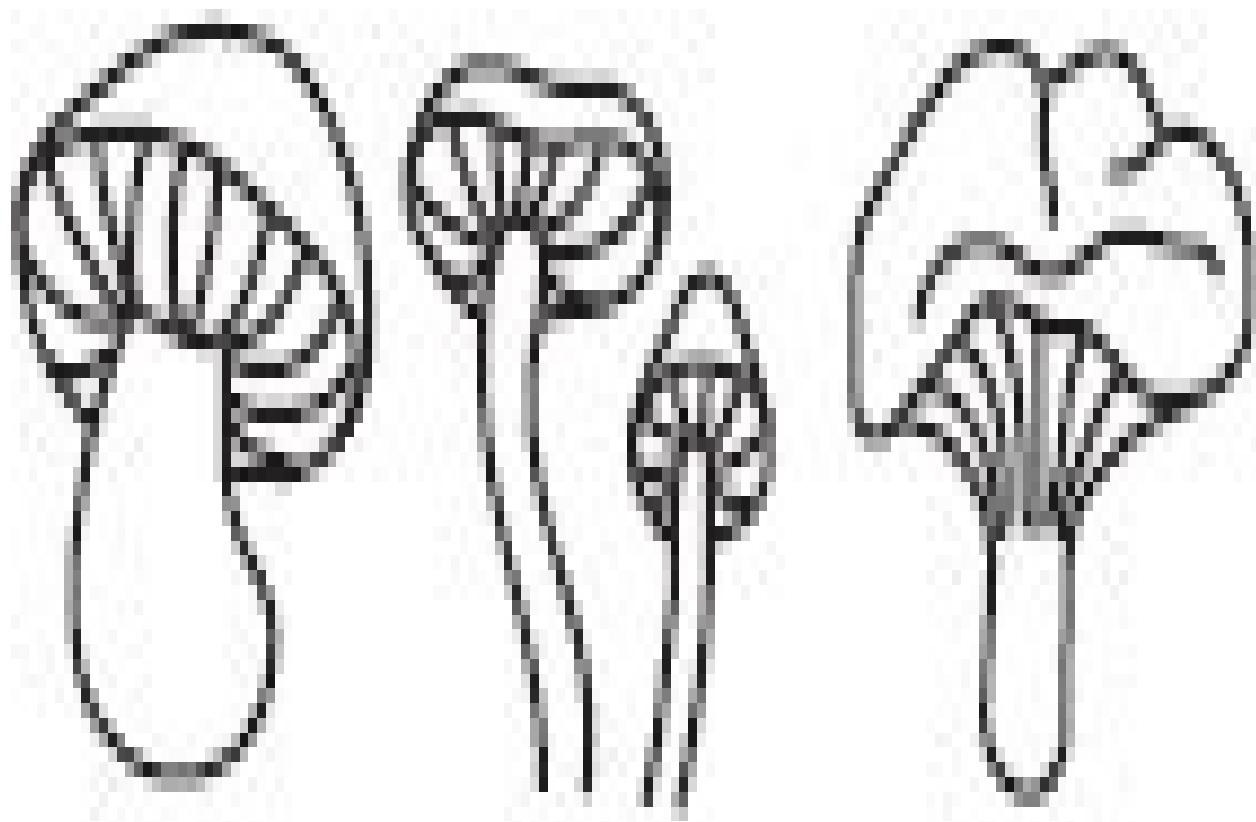
**e Ring present on stem**

Ring absent



**f Bell-shaped cap, slender stem**

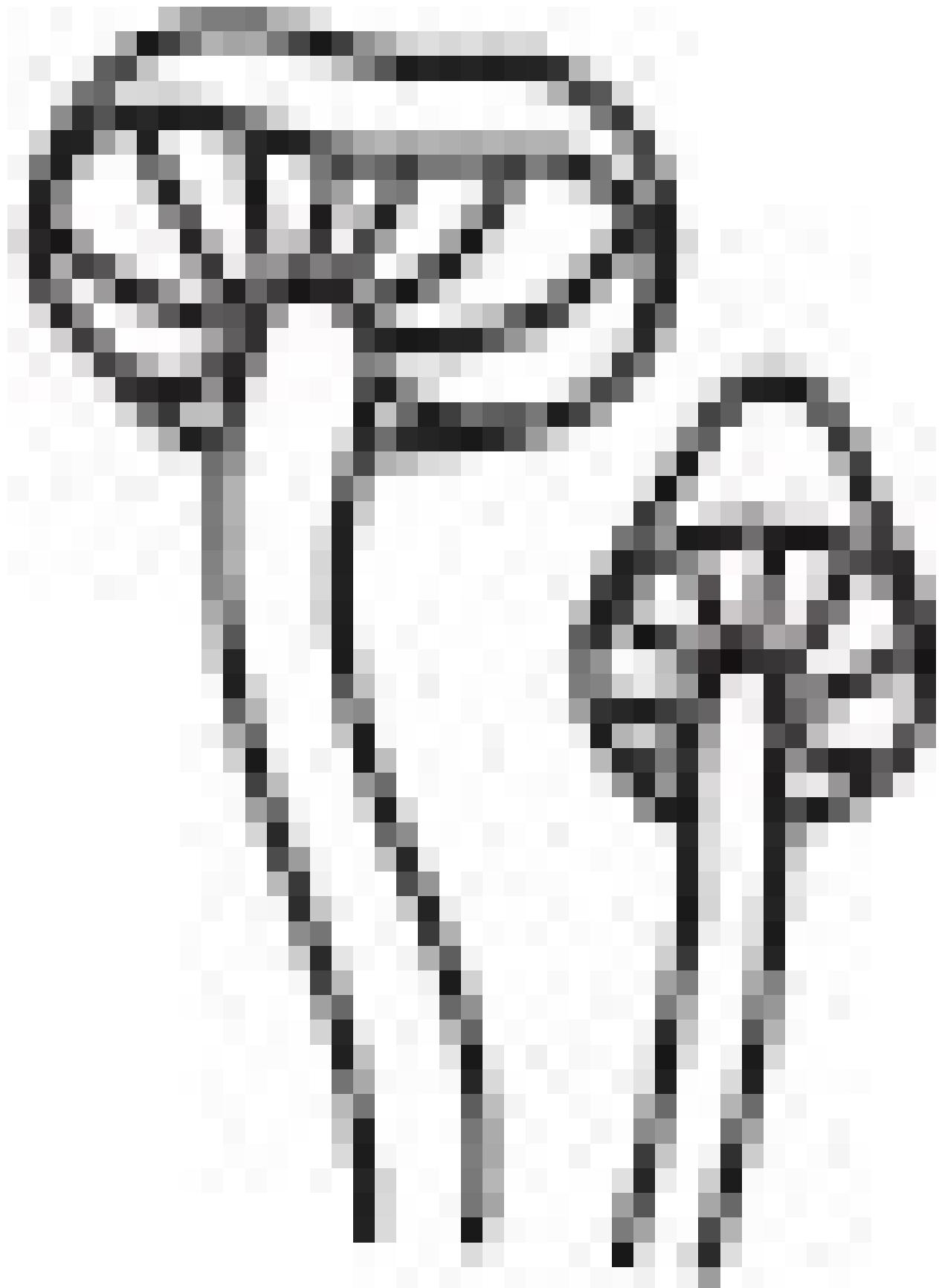
Convex, flat or funnel-shaped cap



**g Gills decurrent**

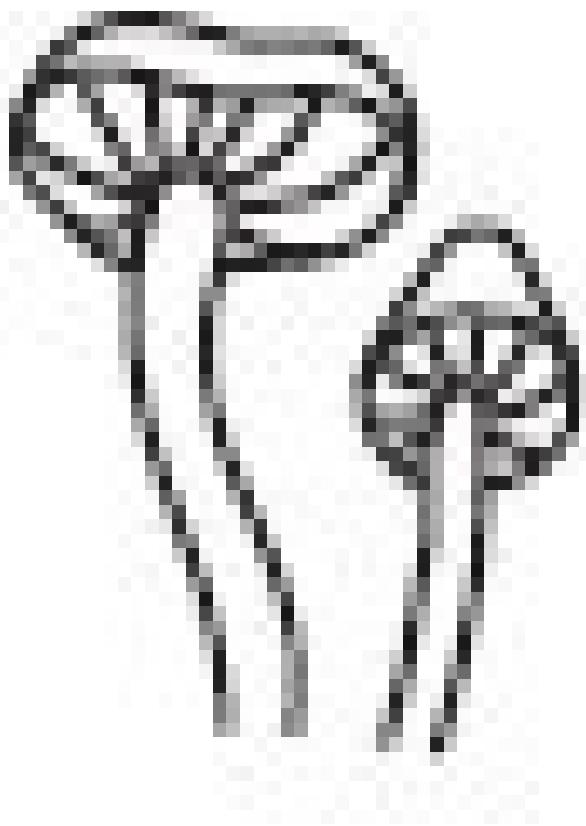
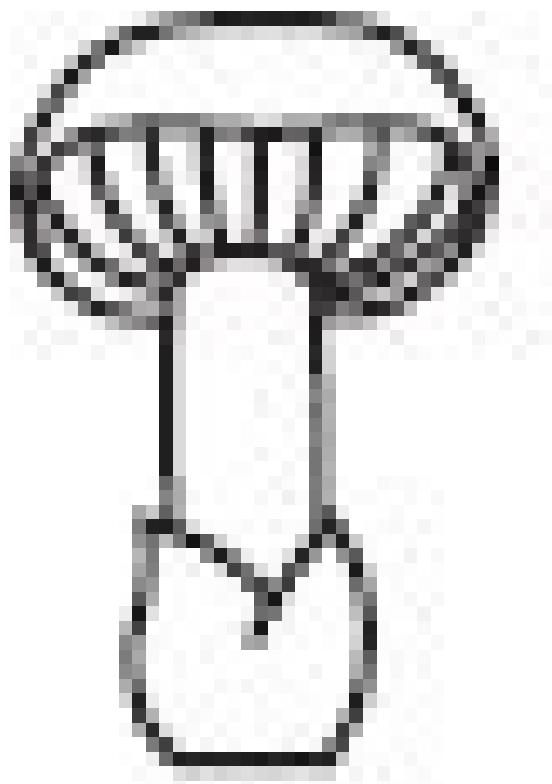
Gills sinuate

Gills adnate or adnexed



**h Cap < 1.5cm, on twigs, leaves or needles**

Cap > 1.5cm across



**i Stem pliable, not easily broken**

Stem not pliable, easily broken

## **AMANITA FAMILY**

Fly Agaric

*Amanita muscaria*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A striking, commonly found fungus often depicted in fairy tale illustrations and on greeting cards. It was traditionally used as a fly killer. The entire young fruitbody is enclosed in a white veil which leaves fragments (which may wash off) on the shiny red, marginally grooved cap. The gills are white and free, the ring hanging and grooved. The stem base is swollen with rings of scales (remains of volva, see Species entries).

**SIZE** Cap 10-20 cm, stem 15-20 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Mostly with birch; also with pine and spruce.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**POISONOUS** Rarely fatal. Hallucinogenic properties.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The edible Caesar's Mushroom (*A.caesarea*) has an orange-red, mostly unspotted cap, yellow stem and gills and a sack-like volva. Not found in Britain.

## **Panther Cap**

*Amanita pantherina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Uncommon but often confused with False Panther Cap, its ochre-brown cap has a grooved margin and regular pattern of white, warty veil fragments (these may wash off). The gills are white and free, the ring ungrooved and pendulous. The white stem has several scaly rings above the eggcup-like swollen base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved and coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Can be fatal if consumed.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** False Panther Cap differs in its grey cap spots, less obvious volva and grooves on the upper surface of the ring. The Blusher also has ring grooves and a less obvious volva but flesh-coloured cap spots.

## False Panther Cap

*Amanita spissa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The flat grey-brown cap is covered with irregular pale grey patches from the remains of the veil which enclosed the young fruitbody. The gills are free and white. The stem is white with a white transient ring which is grooved on the upper surface. The swollen base has bands of scales but no enclosing sack.

**SIZE** Cap 10-15 cm, stem 10-12 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved and coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn.

**POISONOUS** Easily confused with poisonous species and so not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Panther Cap differs in its white cap patches, ungrooved ring and rimmed top to the swollen stem base.

## The Blusher

*Amanita rubescens*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The rounded cap is initially covered with the off-white veil which leaves remnants on the flatter, older cap. The remnants are grey, flesh-coloured or pale yellow and are later widely spaced, if present at all. The underlying cap colour ranges from cream to dark brown. The white gills and flesh bruise pinky-red. The broad white stem has a bulbous base and is flecked rosy-brown below the white, grooved ring.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 7-15 cm x 10-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved and coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Must be well cooked. Causes anaemia if eaten raw.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Confused with Panther Cap, Tall Amanita and Death Cap none of which turn pinky-red on bruising or cutting.

## **Death Cap**

*Amanita phalloides*



Guillaume Eyssartier



Guillaume Eyssartier

One of the most poisonous of all fungi; it has caused many fatalities. After bursting through the white veil the shiny, olive-yellow to greeny-bronze flattened cap is usually devoid of veil fragments. The gills are white and crowded, the white ring grooved and pendulous. The white stem has faint, wavy cap-coloured zones. The base is encased in a white, sack-like volva. It has an unpleasant smell when old.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 10-12 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woods, especially with oak or beech.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes liver and kidney failure.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Confused with False Death Cap which is paler, has no sack-like volva and smells strongly of radish.

## False Death Cap

*Amanita citrina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is pale lemon with irregular ochre-yellow veil fragments. Also common as a white form (var. *alba*). The gills are white and free. The stem is paler than the cap, with a white ring grooved on the upper surface, as is the stem apex. There is a trough-like volva at the bulbous stem base. It smells of raw potato or radish.

**SIZE** Cap 4-9 cm, stem 5-7 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** In both coniferous and broad-leaved woods, mostly with beech.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended as too easily confused with poisonous species (see opposite).

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Death Cap is darker; Destroying Angel is whiter; both lack the sharp smell.

## Destroying Angel

*Amanita virosa*



Jacques Vast



Jacques Vast

The cap is initially hidden in the white veil which is cast off to reveal a smooth, slightly sticky, bell-shaped cap with crowded, white, free gills. The slender white, often curved stem bears loose scales and a large transient ring just below the cap. The base is enclosed in a white sack-like volva. It has a sickly sweet smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 10-15 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** With broad-leaved trees, especially birch.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Symptoms like those from Death Cap.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The pale form of False Death Cap lacks the sack-like volva. Mushrooms (Field Mushroom–Bleeding Brown Mushroom) lack a volva and have pink gills with dark brown spores.

## Tawny Grisette

*Amanita fulva*



Alan Outen

Unlike other common Amanitas, this and the similar, less common, grey-capped Grisette have no ring. Expanding through a white veil, the shiny cap (sticky when moist) is orange-brown with a darker, raised centre and grooved margin. It has white, free gills. The smooth white stem is flushed with the cap colour and narrows towards the apex. The white sack-like volva encloses the stem base.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 10-15 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woods.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Must be well cooked. Not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Grisette (*A. vaginata*) is slightly larger and has a grey to grey-brown cap.

**LEPIOTA FAMILY**

## Parasol Mushroom

*Macrolepiota procera*



Alan Outen

When young, it is shaped like an egg on a stick but the mature cap is flat apart from a raised, dark brown central region which is surrounded by rings of flat brown scales on a cream background. It has dry, creamy-white gills. The long hollow stem tapers from a swollen base and bears faint snake-like markings below the movable double ring.

**SIZE** Cap 10-25 cm, stem 15-35 cm x 15-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Meadows, parks, verges, open woodland.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Excellent nutty taste. Discard stem and fry the cap whole, coated in breadcrumbs.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Often confused with Shaggy Parasol. Slender Parasol (*M. gracilenta*) is about half the size and lacks scales at the cap edge.

## Shaggy Parasol

*Macrolepiota rhacodes*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Frequently confused with Parasol Mushroom, it is smaller, stockier and has a more convex, fleshier cap covered with pale beige scales which bend away from the cap. The white stem bruises red-brown. The cap and stem flesh, together with the cream-coloured gills, turn orange-red when cut. It has a strong, slightly sweet smell.

**SIZE** Cap 12-18 cm, stem 8-12 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass with trees and near garden compost.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** A minority suffer from digestive upset and skin rash.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Variety *hortensis* is stockier with chestnut-coloured scales. *M.konradii* is smaller with a smoother brown cap and only very slight flesh reddening.

## Stinking Parasol

*Lepiota cristata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The small bell-shaped cap matures flat but with a raised red-brown centre surrounded by rings of small, similar-coloured scales on a pinky-white ground. The very crowded, free white gills age browner. The slender silky white stem bears a small transient ring. Unpleasant smell of rubber or tar.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 3-4 mm.

**HABITAT** In lawns and pastures and among woodland litter.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Many closely related species are very poisonous so do not eat small 'Parasols'.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Less common species include those with white, olive or dark-brown cap-scales and those with a fruity smell. Some are very poisonous.

## **TRICHOLOMA FAMILY**

## Saffron Parasol

*Cystoderma amianthinum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Similar to the small Lepiotas, e.g. Stinking Parasol, but with gills attached to the stem. The thin-fleshed, ochre-yellow cap has a granular surface and a shaggy edge. It has adnate, creamy-white gills. The slender, cap-coloured stem is unusual in that the lower region (below the shaggy, often incomplete ring) is covered with tiny scales. It has an earthy smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 3-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Among moss and grass in acid pastures and heaths. Also with needle litter in coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. carcharias* is pinky-grey and is commonest under pine or spruce.

## The Deceiver

*Laccaria laccata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A common woodland species often occurring in large troops. The cap is flat or slightly depressed, pinky-brown, drying paler. It has a granular central region and a striate edge when moist. The gills are flesh-coloured, adnate to slightly decurrent, thick and widely spaced. The stem is thin, fibrous and often flattened.

**SIZE** Cap 1-4 cm, stem 3-10 cm x 2-5 mm.

**HABITAT** Among tree leaf litter and on heaths.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Lacking in flavour. Discard the tough stems.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Closely related species include the larger *L.proxima* growing on peaty soil and the paler *L.bicolor* with a lilac stem base. Tough Shanks (Russet Tough Shank to Spotted Tough Shank) have crowded gills.

## Amethyst Deceiver

*Laccaria amethystea*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Often found in large troops. When young and moist, the cap, stem and gills are deep violet. The cap and stem mature pale buff, the widely-spaced gills to white. The cap edge is often wavy or split, the centre is slightly rough and often darker. The tough stem is frequently bent or twisted.

**SIZE** Cap 1-4 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 3-6 mm.

**HABITAT** With conifers and broad-leaved trees, mostly among beech litter.

**SEASON** Autumn or late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Retains its colour when cooked but lacks flavour. The Deceiver is similar but is red-brown. **SIMILAR SPECIES** Lilac Bell Cap is rosy-lilac with grey-tinged gills and smells of radish. The lilac form of Common White Inocybe has brown gills.

## Wood Blewit

*Lepista nuda*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The large, thick-fleshed cap has a blue-violet tinge and incurved margin when young but older caps turn tan or grey from the centre and the margin becomes wavy. The sinuate, crowded gills fade from lilac to buff as does the solid, non-tapering stem. The smell is mild and fruity.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 15-25 mm.

**HABITAT** In leaf litter of woods, hedgerows and gardens.

**SEASON** Autumn to late winter.

**EDIBLE** Must be well cooked. Watery when old.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Field Blewit lacks the lilac cap and gills. The smaller *L.sordida* has a brown cap and cyanide (bitter almond) smell. Violet species of *Cortinarius* (e.g. *purpurascens* Purple Cortinarius) have rusty-brown spores.

## **Field Blewit**

*Lepista saeva*



Alan Outen

The large cap is initially convex with an inrolled edge, later flat or concave. It is pale, grey-brown, thick and fleshy. The grey-pink gills are sinuate and crowded. The short thick stem is streaked bright violet, especially near its base which is often swollen.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 15-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Grassland and woodland edges, often in rings.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Stem and cap have firm flesh and a subtle taste. Dries well.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Wood Blewit has a violet cap and gills when young. *L.sordida* is pale violet-brown. St George's Mushroom fruits earlier and lacks the lilac stem. Clouded Agaric (has a grey cap and decurrent gills).

## Clouded Agaric

*Clitocybe nebularis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A large fungus often growing in rings. The thick fleshy convex cap matures flat, often with a depressed centre and inrolled edge. It is grey-brown, darker at the centre and frequently with a white bloom. The gills are crowded, cream-coloured, adnate to slightly decurrent. The stem is paler, and thick with a swollen base. It smells strongly of turnip.

**SIZE** Cap 8-20 cm, stem 5-12 cm x 20-30 mm.

**HABITAT** In litter of broad-leaved and coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Can cause digestive upset so best avoided.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** It can be confused with Wood Blewit which also has pale-pink spores and an inrolled cap edge but with sinuate, initially lilac-coloured gills and a fruity smell.

## Club-footed Funnel Cap

*Clitocybe clavipes*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is initially convex with an inrolled edge but later flat and often with a spongy central umbo. It is grey-brown to tan and the stem, which has a swollen base narrowing gently towards its apex, is paler. The gills are very decurrent, uncrowded and creamy-yellow. The smell is sweet and fruity.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 10 mm (wider at base).

**HABITAT** Coniferous or broad-leaved woods. Especially common in beech leaf litter.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating and causes nausea and hot flushes when consumed with alcohol.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. geotropa* is paler and found on chalky soils. Other Funnel Caps lack the swollen stem base.

## Common Funnel Cap

*Clitocybe infundibuliformis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as *C.gibba*, its funnel-shaped, pale creamy-brown cap has a thin, wavy margin and very decurrent, crowded creamy-white gills. The smooth cream-coloured stem is tough and only slightly enlarged at its base. It smells of new-mown hay.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 3-7 cm x 6-10 mm.

**HABITAT** In leaf litter in broad-leaved woods and on heaths.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Often confused with Tawny Funnel Cap (*C.flaccida*) which grows in troops in woodland leaf litter. It has a larger red-brown cap, pale yellow gills and a woolly stem base.

## Aniseed Funnel Cap

*Clitocybe odora*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Easily identified by its strong aniseed smell and blue-green colour. The young blue-green cap is convex with an inrolled margin. Older flat caps dry to pale cream with a wavy margin. The adnate to slightly decurrent, green-tinged gills pale with age. The stem colour is similar to the cap's, the base with white down.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Woodland leaf litter, usually beech or oak.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Thin-fleshed. Best dried.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C.fragrans* also smells of aniseed but has a smaller, yellow-brown cap, buff gills and a long thin stem. *Verdigris Toadstool* is blue-green with brown gills and a ring on the scaly stem.

## Ivory Clitocybe

*Clitocybe dealbata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

One of the most poisonous of the small grassland fungi, it is a dirty-cream colour with pale ochre and flesh tones. Initially convex with an inrolled margin, the smooth cap becomes flat or slightly depressed and wavy-edged. The crowded, pale, flesh-coloured gills are shortly decurrent on to a creamy stem. It has a mealy smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 2-4 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Lawns and short grassland, often in rings.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** Excessive salivation and sweating shortly after ingestion. Can be fatal.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The equally deadly *C. rivulosa* has a frosted cap surface and little or no smell. Fairy Ring Champignon has widely spaced, adnexed gills.

## Wood Woolly-foot

*Collybia peronata*



Alan Outen

The dense woolly hairs at the stem base inspire the descriptive common name and cling to dead leaves. The thin leathery flat cap is red-brown to pale yellow as are the spaced, adnexed gills. The lower half of the slender stem is covered with yellow or pale brown woolly hairs.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 4-6 mm.

**HABITAT** Leaf litter of broad-leaved woods. Occasionally among coniferous needle litter.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** It has a peppery taste. Sometimes used to add spice to certain dishes.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Clustered Tough Shank grows in tufts, has a finely hairy stem and more crowded gills.

## Russet Tough Shank

*Collybia dryophila*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Living up to its name with a russet-brown, smooth hollow fibrous stem which is slightly swollen at the base. The thin flat dry cap is initially also russet but fades to pale buff. The very crowded, adnexed gills are creamy-white, sometimes pale yellow. Mushroom-like smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Gregarious among leaf litter in broad-leaved woods. Also under bracken on heaths.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Tough. Poisonous if eaten raw.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The similar-coloured Spindle Shank (*C.fusipes*) has twisted, flattened stems swollen at the middle and fusing with others at the base. On or near oak and beech stumps.

## Clustered Tough Shank

*Collybia confluens*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Growing in dense clumps with thin stems attached at the base, the thin, flesh-brown convex caps mature flat and dry creamy-white. The slender pink-brown, frequently flattened hollow stem is usually darker than the cap and covered with tiny grey-white down. The gills are flesh-coloured, adnexed and crowded.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 3-5 mm.

**HABITAT** Among leaf litter in broad-leaved woods, mostly with beech and often in rings.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and not worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Tufted Bell Cap has more delicate, less flat caps and grows on oak stumps. Funnel Caps (Club-footed Funnel Cap-Aniseed Funnel Cap) grow in similar habitats but have decurrent gills.

## Greasy Tough Shank

*Collybia butyracea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is fleshier than other common Tough Shanks and has a distinctive greasy or buttery feel, especially on the cap's umbo. This retains the date-brown colour which on most older caps dries pale buff. It has cream-coloured, crowded adnexed gills. The stem tapers from a much thicker base where it has fine white hairs.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 5-9 cm x 10 mm (average).

**HABITAT** Among broad-leaved tree litter and coniferous needle litter, often in troops and rings.

**SEASON** Early autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Not worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The uncommon *C. distorta* is red-brown, lacks the greasy feel and swollen stem base. Restricted to coniferous woods.

## **Spotted Tough Shank**

*Collybia maculata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This large, thick-fleshed, initially white species develops rusty-brown spots on its cap, gills and stem. Handling also causes browning. The deeply convex cap matures flat but often misshapen. The white gills are thin, adnexed and very crowded. The tall, broad, fibrous stem continues root-like underground.

**SIZE** Cap 6-12 cm, stem 8-12 cm x 8-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Under trees, most commonly in coniferous woods. Also on heaths with bracken.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Very tough with a bitter taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** A similar-sized fungus which is also white with pinky-brown blemishes is *Tricholoma columbetta* but this has sinuate gills and smells of meal.

## Fairy Ring Champignon

*Marasmius oreades*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This causes rings of dead grass in lawns. The small, tan, bell-shaped caps retain an umbo in old specimens which dry dirty-white. The wavy margins are often grooved when wet. The adnexed, cream gills are well spaced but have intermediates near the edge. The straw-coloured stem is tough and pliable. It smells of new-mown hay.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Among short grass in lawns.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Use dried in soups and stews. Beware confusion with poisonous species (see below).

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Often found growing with the poisonous Ivory Clitocybe which lacks the grooved cap edge, has decurrent gills, a brittle stem and a mealy smell.

## Little Wheel Fungus

*Marasmius rotula*



G. Redeuilh



## G. Redeuilh

This tiny, very beautiful fungus is tougher than it looks. The thin, creamy-white cap is radially furrowed like a parachute, from the darker, central depressed region to the scalloped margin. The cream, widely-spaced gills are attached not to the stem but to a collar round its apex, like the spokes from a wheel hub. The long red-brown, wiry stem is darker at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 0.7-1.3 cm, stem 2-4 cm x 1-2 mm.

**HABITAT** On dead twigs, bark and occasionally leaf litter of broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** It is tough and very small.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Horse-hair Fungus has a pinky-brown cap and more crowded gills attached to the stem. *M.epiphyllus* is white with a pale stem but no collar.

## Horse-hair Fungus

*Marasmius androsaceus*



S. Cleland



S. Cleland

The dark-brown to black thin wiry stem is very like horse's hair. The convex cap is radially furrowed from a dark red-brown, slightly depressed central region; the rest is dull flesh-pink. The pinky-brown gills are adnately attached. The black stem is smooth, shiny and tough.

**SIZE** Cap 0.5-1 cm, stem 3-5 cm x 1 mm.

**HABITAT** In large numbers on dead needles and twigs of coniferous species. Also on dead heather.

**SEASON** Spring to early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *M.ramealis* is pinky-white with a much shorter, broader, often curved, scurfy stem. Most common on dead blackberry stems.

## **Bonnet Bell Cap**

*Mycena galericulata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The bell-shaped cap is light brown to grey, paler at the margin which is furrowed and later upturned. It flattens and wrinkles with age but retains a central umbo. The gills are pale grey with a flesh tint, adnate and spaced with cross veins. The stem is smooth, often curved, the same colour as the cap, with white hairs at its base. It smells of meal.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 2-5 mm.

**HABITAT** Clustered on broad-leaved stumps and fallen logs.

**SEASON** Most of the year.

**EDIBLE** Insubstantial and not worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Stump Bell Cap is more densely tufted, has an ammonia-like smell and is associated with coniferous trees.

## Stump Bell Cap

*Mycena alcalina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very common species, its Latin name comes from its alkaline, ammonia-like smell. The small, brownish-grey, bell-shaped cap often has an olive tint. The margin is paler when wet, showing darker lines. The adnate gills ascend to the stem apex and are pale grey with a white margin. The thin smooth stem is cap-coloured.

**SIZE** Cap 1-3 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 2 mm.

**HABITAT** In tufts on coniferous stumps; twigs and logs.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating despite its mild taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *M.leptocephala* has a comparable smell but is less robust, rarely clustered and occurs on woodland soil and among leaf or needle litter.

## Tufted Bell Cap

*Mycena inclinata*



Alan Outen

As its name suggests, this grows in tufts (on oak stumps). It is red-brown with a darker central umbo and a striate margin that extends beyond the white adnate gills which mature flesh-pink. The long, frequently twisted stem is off-white at the apex but more yellow-brown in the centre and dark red-brown at the base which is covered with white woolly hairs. It smells of rancid oil.

**SIZE** Cap 2-3 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** Densely tufted on oak stumps.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating despite the mild taste.

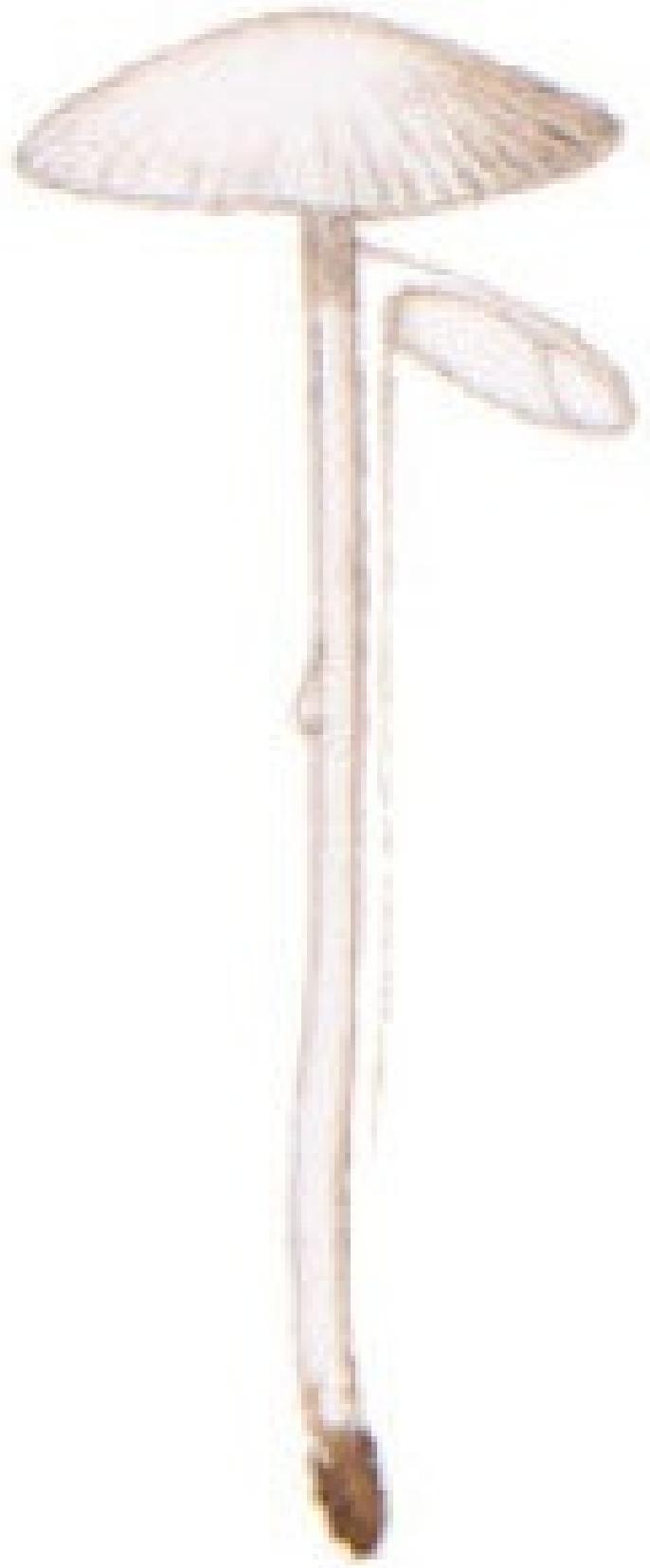
**SIMILAR SPECIES** On stumps - Bonnet Bell Cap lacks a dark stem base.  
*M.haematopus* has red-brown caps and stems which exude a red liquid when damaged.

## Milky Bell Cap

*Mycena galopus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The common name refers to the milky-white fluid which is exuded from the broken stems of young specimens. The conical cap has a brown central umbo, the remainder is paler and striated. (In var. *alba* the whole fruitbody is white.) It has adnate, ascending grey-white gills. The stem is grey, darker at the base. It smells faintly of radish.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 1-2 mm.

**HABITAT** Among leaf and needle litter of both broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The less common *M.leucogala* also exudes a white juice from its broken stem but the cap and stem apex is a deeper brown-black colour.

## Small Bleeding Bell Cap

*Mycena sanguinolenta*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The conical cap later flattens but maintains a dark red-brown central umbo. The rest is pinky-brown with darker striations. The adnate pinky-white gills have a red-brown margin. The hollow, long russet stem exudes a pink-red latex when broken.

**SIZE** Cap 0.5-1.5 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 1 mm.

**HABITAT** Among moss in both broad-leaved and coniferous woods. Also on heaths.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger *M.haematopus* has a stem which exudes a darker red latex when damaged and grows clustered on rotting wood. The uncommon *M.crocata* occurs with beech litter and exudes an orange-red juice.

## Lilac Bell Cap

*Mycena pura*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

It has quite a large cap (for a Bell Cap) and one which becomes flat or even slightly depressed around its central umbo. The margin is lined when moist. The cap and stem have a violet or purple hue. The adnate to almost decurrent, crowded gills are pale grey with a lilac tint and the stem is smooth and thick. It smells strongly of radish.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 3-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Among leaf litter in both broad-leaved and coniferous woodland.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** Contains muscarine.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Some put the pink-coloured, non-umbonate form as a separate species - *M. rosea*. The edible Amethyst Deceiver has spaced violet gills.

## Yellow-stemmed Bell Cap

*Mycena epipterygia*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The yellow stems of this species make it stand out despite its small size. The convex yellow-brown cap is semi-transparent with striations almost to its centre. Its smooth surface is slimy when moist. The white gills are adnate to slightly decurrent. The long slender stem is a bright lemon-yellow and sticky to the touch.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 1-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In coniferous woods among moss, grass and needle litter. Also on heaths.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Too small to be worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other yellow-stemmed Bell Caps include *M.viscosa* and *M.epipterygioides*. Both grow on wood, including stumps; the latter on conifers.

## Orange Bell Cap

*Mycena acicula*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This minute species is distinguished by its bright orange colour. The tiny convex, orange cap is more yellow at the striate, semi-transparent margin. The pale yellow gills ascend to the top of the yellow, thread-like stem which is whiter at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 0.4-1 cm, stem 3-4 cm x 0.5-1 mm.

**HABITAT** Under conifers usually among moss.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The tiny *M.adonis* also grows in moss but has a pink cap and gills. The larger *M.flavoalba* is yellow with decurrent gills and grows in short grass. *M.acicula* is easily confused with Orange Moss Agaric but this has very decurrent gills.

## Orange Moss Agaric

*Rickenella fibula*



G. Dickson



G. Dickson

This delicate white-spored fungus was previously included with the Mycenas from which it differs in having deeply decurrent gills. The convex cap flattens with age but has a centrally depressed region which is a darker orange. The margin is grooved and often wavy-edged. The pale orange, decurrent gills descend on to the yellow-orange stem which narrows to its base.

**SIZE** Cap 0.4-1 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 1 mm.

**HABITAT** Among moss and short grass in damp places.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Too small to be worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger grey-brown *R.swartzii* (also known as *R.setipes*) grows in similar habitats. Orange Bell Cap has gills which ascend to the stem.

## Umbrella Navel Cap

*Omphalina ericetorum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A common little fungus of moors and heaths, it is sometimes included in the genus *Gerronema*. The yellow-brown convex cap has a darker, centrally depressed area surrounded by a deeply grooved, inrolled margin – hence the name Navel Cap. Some of the widely-spaced, decurrent, pale ochre gills are forked. It has a smooth, pale brown stem.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 1-3 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** On acid peaty soil among moss or lichens. Also on rotten wood.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *O.pyxidata* is red-brown with more crowded gills and grows on bare soil or in short grass. The darker *O.sphagnicola* grows on bog moss (Sphagnum).

## Rooting Shank

*Oudemansiella radicata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The convex red-brown cap matures flat with a broad central umbo around which the surface is radially wrinkled. It is slimy when wet, shiny when dry. The white gills are broad and adnexed. The long, longitudinally grooved, tough stem is paler than the cap. It is darker and broader at the base before narrowing and continuing like a root.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 8-20 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** On broad-leaved stumps or from roots and buried wood; mostly with beech. Singly or in small groups.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating due to slimy cap.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *O.longipes* (also known as *Xerula pudens*) has a dry, grey-brown, felty cap and a stem covered with red-brown velvety hairs.

## **Porcelain Mushroom**

*Oudemansiella mucida*



Bob Gibbons



Bob Gibbons

Also known as *Cuphophyllum pratensis*. A beautiful fungus with a shiny, semi-transparent, porcelain-like appearance. The broadly convex, creamy-grey cap is wrinkled at the margin and very slimy when moist. It has broad, spaced, adnate cream-coloured gills. The stem is white above the large ring; the lower part is greyer, sticky and often bent to bring the cap to the horizontal.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 3-7 mm.

**HABITAT** Always on beech; stumps, fallen logs and also as a weak parasite on trunks and side branches of mature living trees. Usually clustered.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** The slime must be removed first.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None.

## Velvet Shank

*Flammulina velutipes*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species continues fruiting through the winter. The medium-sized caps soon flatten and are a distinctive orange-brown, darker at the centre, slightly lined at the margin. The surface is shiny and sticky. The adnate, broad spaced white gills mature pale yellow. The stem is tough, velvety, cap-coloured at the apex and dark brown at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 2-7 cm, stem 3-10 cm x 3-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Clustered on dead wood (stumps, logs and standing timber) of broad-leaved trees, typically on elm.

**SEASON** Autumn to spring.

**EDIBLE** Remove the slimy layer and tough stem.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Confusable with other tufted wood rotters such as Brown Stew Fungus and Sulphur Tuft but these have brown spores and a ringed stem.

## Honey Fungus

*Armillaria mellea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A destructive species, it kills a wide range of trees and shrubs and spreads to new hosts by bootlace-like strands. The deeply convex caps mature flat with an inrolled margin. The colour ranges from honey-yellow to red-brown. The gills are adnate to decurrent, crowded, flesh-coloured and later have rusty spots. The stem is long with a yellow-white ring; its brown base not swollen.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 6-12 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Densely clustered on both living trunks and dead stumps and roots of broad-leaved trees and conifers.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Not easily digested. Must be well cooked.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Bulbous Honey Fungus.

## **Bulbous Honey Fungus**

***Armillaria bulbosa***



Alan Outen

Unlike Honey Fungus, this species does not kill trees, it simply rots dead wood. The cap is similar to Honey Fungus, with a more scaly top. The immature gills are covered with a cobweb-like veil that leaves a transient ring on the short, stocky stem which has a noticeably swollen base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 20-30 mm.

**HABITAT** On tree stumps and dead wood mostly in small clumps and not densely clustered.

**SEASON** Late autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Not easily digested. Must be well cooked.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Honey Fungus lacks the bulbous base. *A.ostoyae* grows on conifers. Shaggy Pholiota with brown spores has upturned brown scales on its cap and lower stem.

## Soap-scented Tricholoma

*Tricholoma saponaceum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The thick-fleshed, broadly convex cap has an incurved edge and ranges from olive to grey-brown but may be much paler at the margin. The smooth cap cracks when dry and is pink where damaged. It has broad, spaced, sinuate, cream to pale green gills. The cream stem often has grey-brown fibres or scales and is more pink below. It tapers to a root-like base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-10 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In troops, usually under trees.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Bitter taste. May cause digestive upset and easily confused with poisonous species.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *T.ustale* has a sticky, chestnut-brown cap, no soapy smell and is found in broad-leaved woods.

## Grey Tricholoma

*Tricholoma terreum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is initially bell-shaped and finally almost flat with a broad umbo. It is dark grey to black with radiating fibrils and an inrolled margin. The gills are broad, spaced, sinuate and grey-white. The stem is pale grey, smooth and cylindrical.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 3-7 cm x 10 mm.

**HABITAT** Most frequent under conifers.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Has a mild taste but other grey Tricholomas are poisonous.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *T.virgatum*, which grows on acid soils in coniferous woods, is of a similar size and also has grey-brown fibrils on the cap but the centre is markedly umbonate, the stem has a slightly swollen base and the flesh has a bitter, burning taste.

## Scaly Tricholoma

*Tricholoma argyraceum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is initially grey-brown and convex, maturing pale beige and flat but with scales at the centre and a wavy incurled margin which is covered with radiating fibres. It yellows from the margin when old or picked. The grey-white, broad sinuate gills also yellow with age. The stem is cylindrical and often bent. It smells faintly of flour. Also known as *T. sculpturatum*.

**SIZE** Cap 3-7 cm x 3-6 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Under both broad-leaved (usually beech) and coniferous (usually pine) trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** A mild taste but not very good eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Grey Tricholoma does not yellow and lacks both scales and smell.

## Yellow-brown Tricholoma

*Tricholoma fulvum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The orange-brown cap flattens but for a broad, darker, central umbo and a faintly ribbed margin. The surface is smooth, shiny and sticky when young. The broad, sinuate yellow-brown gills often have darker spots. The stem apex is paler than the cap but darker at the stem base and covered with red-brown fibres. It is sticky when moist and has an unpleasant mealy smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 7-11 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** On wet, acidic soils mostly under birch. Occasionally with conifers.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**EDIBLE** Poor. Can be confused with other brown species.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *T.ustale* with red-staining gills. *T.populinum* has white gills and grows under aspen and poplar.

## Sulphur Tricholoma

*Tricholoma sulphureum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A number of woodland fungi have a yellow cap, stem and gills but this is the only one to smell strongly of coal-gas. The sulphur-yellow, matt cap surface often includes red-brown tints. It has similar-coloured broad, distant, sinuate gills. The yellow stem is covered with small brown fibrils.

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 8-18 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees e.g. oak or beech, more rarely under conifers.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The smell is unpleasant.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *T.equestre* (previously *flavovirens*) is also yellow but has brown scales on its umbo. Yellow species of *Cortinarius* have adnate gills, brown spores and a cobweb veil when young (Red-banded *Cortinarius*).

## St George's Mushroom

*Calocybe gambosa*



G. Redeuilh



## G. Redeuilh

So called because it fruits as early as 23 April, though it is most frequent in May. The mealy smelling fleshy cap starts domed with inrolled edges but becomes flatter with wavy, often split margins. It is dry, smooth, creamy-white to pale tan. The white, sinuate gills are very crowded. The broad, solid, white stem is often curved and thicker at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 20-40 mm.

**HABITAT** In pastures, road verges and lawns. Also among spring flowers in woodland edges and hedgerows.

**SEASON** April to June.

**EDIBLE** Good when young; with a firm, dry flesh.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Most similar-looking species fruit later but beware the poisonous Red-staining *Inocybe* (Blood-red *Cortinarius*).

## Clustered Brown Cap

*Lyophyllum decastes*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

The fruitbodies are in crowded clusters. The almost hemispherical young caps age more convex with a broad central umbo where the grey to hazel-brown colour is darkest. The margin is wavy. The gills are adnate and a dirty white colour. The grey-white stem is usually flattened, bent and twisted, fusing with several others.

**SIZE** Cap 6-10 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 10-18 mm.

**HABITAT** Near stumps or from buried wood in woodland, gardens, parks and even pavements.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not highly rated. Beware highly poisonous lookalike Livid Entoloma.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *L.connatum*, is white with shortly decurrent gills. Beware the poisonous Livid Entoloma.

## Changeable Melanoleuca

*Melanoleuca melaleuca*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The smooth cap is dark brown when moist but dries much paler. The gills are crowded, white and weakly sinuate. The stem has pale brown fibres on a white background and is swollen at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 10 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass in pastureland and with leaf litter in woodlands.  
Solitary or in small troops.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Insipid taste so not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *M.cognata* is golden-brown with ochre gills and a mealy smell; it fruits in both spring and autumn in coniferous woods. Fawn Pluteus is easily confused with melaleuca but has pink spores and always grows on rotting wood.

## Plums and custard

*Tricholomopsis rutilans*



G. Redeuilh



## G. Redeuilh

The name refers to the colour of the cap and gills. The large, flat cap is covered with fine red-purple scales, less dense near the incurved margins where the background yellow shows through. The apricot-yellow gills are weakly sinuate and crowded. The scaly, cap-coloured stem often curves. It has a musty smell.

**SIZE** Cap 4-12 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 10-25 mm.

**HABITAT** On old conifer stumps, mostly with pine.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not poisonous but not edible despite its name.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller, yellower *T. decora* also grows on conifer stumps.

**WAX GILL FAMILY**

## Ivory Wax Cap

*Hygrocybe nivea*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Also known as *Camarophyllum niveus*, its thin-fleshed cap is initially deeply convex but expands flat with an almost transparent, lined margin which often upturns to reveal the gill edges. It is smooth to greasy, pale beige when young and moist, but drying creamy-white. The gills are the same colour as the cap, broad, well-spaced and decurrent. The stem is cylindrical and white.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Among short grass in lawns, pastures and moors.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Beware confusion with poisonous species.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *H.virginea* is larger. The poisonous Ivory Clitocybe has flesh-coloured gills. Fairy Ring Champignon has adnexed gills.

## Yellow Wax cap

*Hygrocybe flavescens*



Alan Outen

The pale orange to lemon cap has wavy, split margins which often reveal the gill edges. The smooth, shiny, slimy surface has lined margins when moist. The gills are pale yellow with a whiter edge, moderately crowded and deeply notched where they attach to the stem. The stem is drier, grooved and often flattened.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 5-7 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass in lawns and short grass.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Small and slimy, with an insipid taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other yellow Wax Caps include *H. chlorophana* with a slimy stem, the much smaller *H. vitellina* with decurrent gills, and the yellow and green Parrot Wax Cap.

## Orange-red Wax Cap

*Hygrocybe strangulata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The small, deep orange cap soon flattens with a paler, lined margin which is often split when old. The greasy cap surface later dries and the centre breaks up into small scales. The orange-yellow gills are adnate or shortly decurrent. The stem, similar in colour, is often flattened and tapers to a thinner, paler base. It is odourless.

**SIZE** Cap 1-4 cm, stem 2-4 cm x 4-7 mm.

**HABITAT** In pasture and heathland on acid soil.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not recorded as being worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger, fleshier Meadow Wax Cap is more tawny-apricot and the pointed Blackening Wax Cap darkens with age. *H.ceracea* has a non-scaly cap and cross-veins between the gills.

## Blackening Wax Cap

*Hygrocybe nigrescens*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This striking species is one of several which blacken with age. The medium-sized, bell-shaped cap later becomes more convex. It is orange-red, slightly greasy and covered with small radiating fibrils. The wavy margin often splits. The broad, pale-yellow gills are almost free of the stem and have a toothed edge. The stem has a white base. The cap, gills and stem all blacken on handling and with age.

**SIZE** Cap 4-7 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass on pastureland, lawns and road verges.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Slightly bitter taste; edibility suspect.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The slightly smaller *H.conica* has a more pointed, bright orange cap which also darkens with age. The rarer *H.calyptraeformis* has a conical lilac-pink cap.

## Meadow Wax Cap

*Hygrocybe pratensis*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Also known as *Cuphophyllum pratensis*, its convex cap becomes flat and concave but retains a broad, central umbo. The colour varies from apricot to tawny-buff and the greasy surface dries with age when the margin often splits. The thick, widely spaced waxy gills are decurrent and have cross-veins. The stout short stem narrows to its base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Short grass of lawns, pastures and woods.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Needs slow cooking. Mild taste.

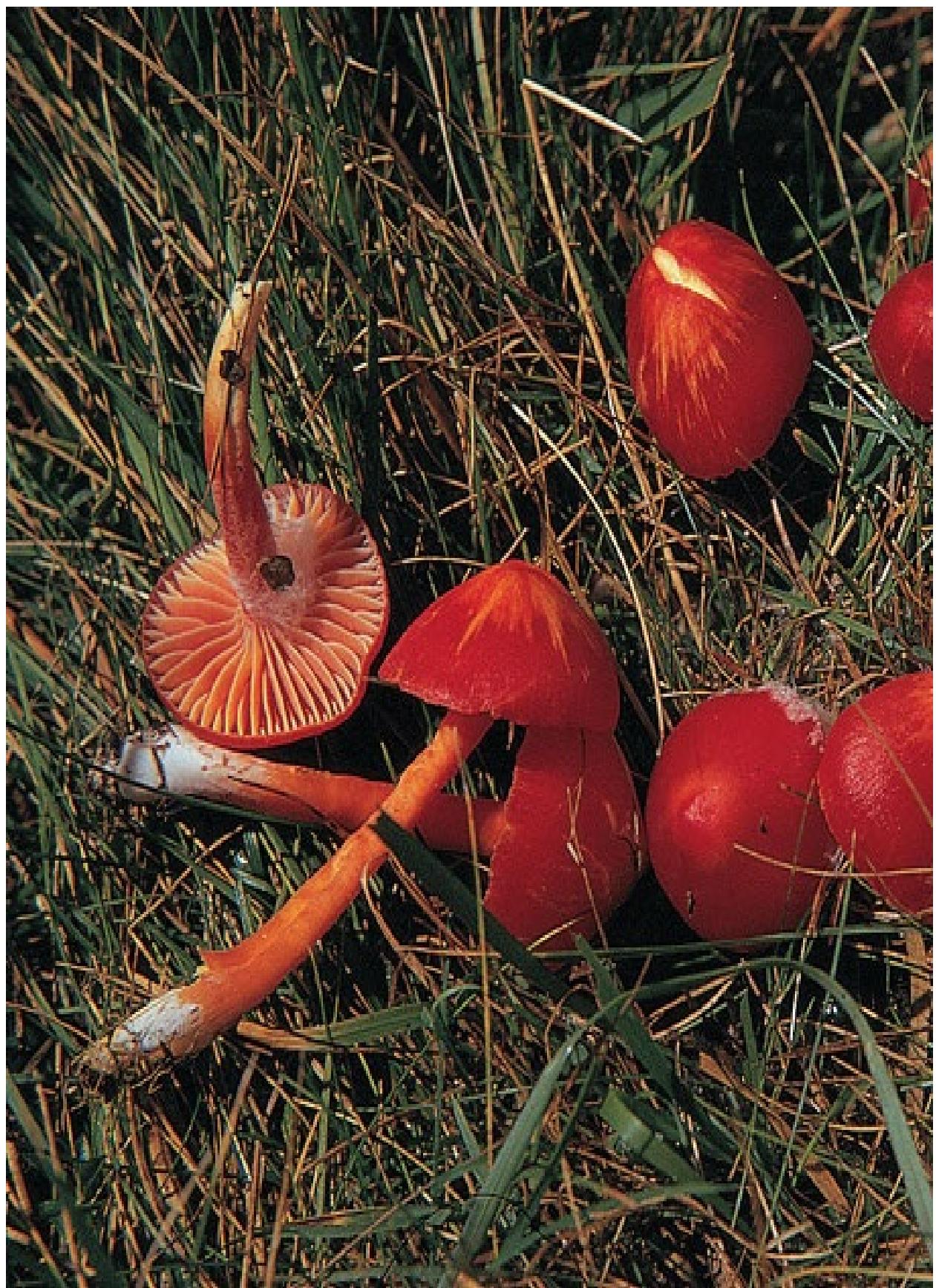
**SIMILAR SPECIES** *H. quieta* is more orange and its gills are not decurrent. False Chanterelle has an inrolled cap margin, crowded orange gills and a slender stem. Chanterelle grows in moss in woods.

## Scarlet Hood

*Hygrocybe coccinea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The small bright cherry-red, convex cap is smooth and shiny when young and moist, but dries and fades to orange-pink with age. The thick orange-red gills pale with age. The attachment is adnate but with a small decurrent tooth. The cylindrical orange-red stem tapers to a pale base where it may become flattened.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 5-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Among short grass and moss in lawns and pasture.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Not poisonous despite the orange-red flesh.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The much larger and fleshier *H.punicea* has adnexed gills and dark-red cap flesh. The smaller, orange-red *H.miniata* has a dry cap, minutely scaly near the centre.

## Parrot Wax Cap

*Hygrocybe psittacina*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

The bell-shaped cap has a lined margin and is very slimy. Older caps dry, flatten and lose their green colour, becoming yellow or even pink-tinged. The thick, adnate gills start green but age yellow from their margins. The slimy stem is initially green near the apex and yellow at the broader base but the green disappears with age. It is odourless.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass in poor pasture and open woodland.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not poisonous but not pleasant to eat.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Older specimens are like the orange and yellow Wax Caps but these lack green tints. Verdigris Toadstool is more blue-green and has almost black spores.

## Herald of Winter

*Hygrophorus hypothejus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Most fungi stop fruiting in late autumn but this occasional species does not appear until the frosts start, as its name suggests. Convex when young, flat later, the olive-brown slimy cap dries pale ochre. The margin remains inrolled until old. The broad, shortly decurrent, creamy gills mature pale orange. The young stem has a ring-like zone and is white and slimy; drying and ageing pale orange. It is odourless.

**SIZE** Cap 3-5 cm, stem 5-7 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Among needle litter in coniferous or mixed woods, usually with pine.

**SEASON** Late autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Mild tasting but poor texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *H.agathosmus* has a grey cap and cream gills.

## **RUSSULA FAMILY**

## Common Yellow Russula

*Russula ochroleuca*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Russulas are unusual in that they can be readily crumbled. In this, the commonest of the yellow species, the convex cap soon flattens and may become concave. The matt, ochre-yellow, peelable skin matures with a faintly grooved edge. The pale cream gills are neat, adnate and quite crowded. The white cylindrical stem greys with age. The taste is acrid.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In both broad-leaved and coniferous woods.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Peppery flesh is not to everyone's taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Both Yellow-gilled Russula and Geranium-scented Russula have yellow gills. The bright yellow Yellow Swamp Russula grows with birch in wet ground.

## Yellow-gilled Russula

*Russula lutea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species is distinguished from the Common Yellow Russula by its usually smaller, thin-fleshed, more convex cap which is golden or egg-yolk yellow. The brittle white stem is slightly broader at the base. The crowded adnate gills are a rich orange-yellow. Older specimens smell of apricots.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 2-6 cm x 6-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, especially oak.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Mild tasting but rather insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger Geranium-scented Russula has pale yellow gills and is distinguished by its darker cap, off-white stem, burning taste and geranium smell.

## Yellow Swamp Russula

*Russula claroflava*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Best identified by its habitat as it is confined to very wet ground under birch. The fleshy, bright yellow cap remains convex with a shiny, slightly sticky surface. The pale, ochre-yellow, adnexed gills are quite crowded. The stem is white and cylindrical. The gills and other parts bruise dark grey. It has a pleasant smell.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In wet ground under birch trees; often with Sphagnum (bog) moss.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Has a pleasant texture and taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** No other Russula has a clear yellow cap and such a specific habitat.

## Geranium-scented Russula

*Russula fellea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species is distinguished from Common Yellow Russula which has a similar-coloured cap, by the fact that the yellow-brown cap colour is also found (slightly paler) on the gills and stem. The cap, initially sticky and convex, soon flattens and may become concave. It only peels at the margin, which is slightly furrowed. The gills are crowded, adnexed and straw-coloured like the cylindrical stem. It smells of geranium or cooked fruit.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Most frequent under beech trees.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The flesh has a very hot taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The mild tasting, Yellow-gilled Russula has a white stem.

## Stinking Russula

*Russula foetans*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This large, honey-brown Russula has a slimy feel to its cap which is distinctly furrowed and warty at the margin which often matures wavy and split. The thick, spaced, adnate gills are dirty cream as is the hollow, frequently flattened stem. Both gills and stem age brown-spotted. It has an unpleasant oily smell, like rancid butter.

**SIZE** Cap 6-15 cm, stem 6-15 cm x 20-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Under both broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Unpleasant smell and peppery cap flesh.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller *R.laurocerasi* has a similarly coloured, grooved cap but it is less sticky and smells of marzipan or bitter almonds.

## Fragile Russula

*Russula fragilis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

While all Russulas are crumbly this small species is especially delicate, as its name implies. The thin-fleshed, flat cap is often depressed at the centre where it is a darker purple in contrast to the more violet or pink margin which is usually grooved. The pale cream adnate gills have toothed edges (visible only through a lens). The white stem is tinged with yellow and is swollen at the base. It smells of boiled sweets (pear drops).

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Under both broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Has a very acrid taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Birch Russula is more yellow-pink, has more distant white gills and lacks the fruity smell.

## **Birch Russula**

***Russula betularum***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This small, thin-fleshed Russula is always found near birch. The convex to flat cap is pale red-pink with areas of yellow-buff. The furrowed margin is frequently warty. The entire skin can be peeled. The gills are adnexed, white and with a slightly toothed edge. The white stem is often longer than the cap diameter. The smell is faintly fruity.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 3-7 cm x 5-8 mm

**HABITAT** Under birch; often in moss on damp ground.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Very acrid taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other pink-red species are not restricted to birch and include Fragile Russula and Bare-toothed Russula.

## **Bare-toothed Russula**

*Russula vesca*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Old specimens of this fungus are easily identified as the skin peels easily and pulls away from the cap margin revealing the tooth-like white flesh and gill tops. The cap colour varies from pinky-red to pale brown and often includes olive tints. The margin is shallowly furrowed. The adnexed, crowded, pale cream gills often fork near the stem and later discolour with rusty spots. The white, firm stem narrows at its base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 10-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woods, mostly with beech and oak.

**SEASON** Midsummer to early autumn.

**EDIBLE** Pleasant nutty taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Russula nitida* has a similar-coloured, shiny cap with a peeling margin but pale yellow gills.

## The Charcoal Burner

*Russula cyanoxantha*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

A very common species with a firm fleshy cap which is predominantly a mix of blue and yellow but often includes violet, grey, brown and green tints; like the many colours of a charcoal flame. The crowded white gills are adnexed, often forked and unusually pliable for a Russula. The solid white stem may show purple tints. The smell is indistinct. Charcoal Burner is much less crumbly than other Russulas.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 10-30 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, especially with beech.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Mild taste and firm texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *R.parazurea* has a grey-blue, scurfy cap and cream-coloured gills.

## Blackish Purple Russula

*Russula atropurpurea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This has the crumbly texture typical of a Russula but with a smooth, firm cap which starts convex but matures flatter with a central depression. A red-purple margin surrounds the dark purple to black centre and grey or brown patches. The gills are white, adnate and quite crowded. The white stem becomes streaked with grey and the base discolours pinky-brown. It smells faintly of apples.

**SIZE** Cap 4-12 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woodland, with beech and oak. Occasionally under conifers.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Must be cooked. Mild to slightly peppery.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Some forms of Crab-scented Russula have a dark purple cap but the gills are straw-coloured.

## **Blackening Russula**

*Russula nigricans*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species varies considerably in shape, size and colour as it matures. The cap is initially small, dirty-white, deeply convex and with an inrolled margin; as it flattens it turns brown and finally large, concave and black. Cracks reveal the paler flesh below. The well-spaced adnate gills are very thick and start creamy-yellow but become spotted with red-brown and later turn black. The firm stem also darkens with age. It has a fruity smell.

**SIZE** Cap 8-25 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 15-30 mm.

**HABITAT** All kinds of woodland but commonly with beech.

**SEASON** Midsummer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Good when young, later tough and full of maggots.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *R.albonigra* has crowded, decurrent gills.

## The Sickener

*Russula emetica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The best-known of the Russulas because of its reputation for causing sickness. The convex cap, which soon flattens, is thin-fleshed and easily broken. It is shiny and sticky when wet with easily peelable skin which is a brilliant cherry-red with some paler areas. The creamy-white adnexed gills are moderately spaced. The spongy white stem is swollen at the base. It has a slightly fruity smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under conifers on moist acid soil, often with moss.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** The acrid flesh causes vomiting.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Beechwood Sickener.

## **Beechwood Sickener**

***Russula mairei***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Unlike the Sickener, this species has a smaller, firmer, matt cap which is a lighter shade of scarlet and occasionally pink or almost white. The crowded white gills age slightly grey-green. The firm, solid stem yellows but does not swell at the base. It smells of coconut when young, sweeter when old.

**SIZE** Cap 3-7 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Under beech trees.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**POISONOUS** The acrid flesh causes sickness.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The Sickener has a larger, more fragile, deep red cap and grows under conifers. Other red Russulas are paler or have off-white gills or stems.

## Crab-scented Russula

*Russula xerampelina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

As the picture shows this species can be found in a number of different-coloured varieties. The broadly convex smooth cap may be purple or brown or pale yellow or olive-green or a mixture of all. The thick adnexed gills are pale ochre and show cross veins at their bases. The white stem has a faint pink flush and browns towards its base and with handling. Old specimens smell strongly of crab.

**SIZE** Cap 7-15 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 15-30 mm.

**HABITAT** In broad-leaved woods, mostly with beech and oak.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Mild taste despite the crab-like smell.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smell of xerampelina distinguishes it from other common, similar-coloured Russulas.

## Grass-green Russula

*Russula aeruginea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The pale yellow-green cap has brown tints and a darker centre. The margin is usually grooved. The adnexed, crowded yellow-ochre gills sometimes fork. The white stem narrows at the base. It has no distinctive smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 5-8 cm x 8-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Most often found under birch trees.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn.

**POISONOUS** May cause digestive upset.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other green Russulas include *heterophylla* with crowded white, decurrent gills which fork near the stem; *virescens* (Green-cracking Russula) with a dry skin which cracks into a mosaic pattern; and green varieties of The Charcoal Burner, normally dark green with shades of purple and bronze.

## Peppery Milk Cap

*Lactarius piperatus*



Alan Outen



## Alan Outen

The woodland Milk Caps have a crumbly texture but differ from the Russulas (Common Yellow Russula-Grass-green Russula) in having decurrent gills which exude a latex (milk) when broken. Peppery Milk Cap has a medium, ivory-white, matt, funnel-shaped cap with an inrolled margin. The very crowded, cream-coloured, thin decurrent gills age pinky-yellow and exude an acrid milk when damaged. The stem is long and white.

**SIZE** Cap 8-15 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 20-30 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Dried specimens have been used as a seasoning but the very acrid taste is not for the faint hearted.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Fleecy Milk Cap has a downy cap and thick, white gills which also exude a very hot milk

## Fleecy Milk Cap

*Lactarius vellereus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The convex cap soon flattens and the central depression gives it a shallow funnel-shape. The creamy-white surface is velvety especially near the inrolled margin. Older caps, up to the size of a dinner plate, have discoloured yellow or brown areas. The white, decurrent, distant gills exude lots of white milk when damaged. Older gills brown slightly. The stem is solid, white and stocky.

**SIZE** Cap 10-25 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 20-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woodland.

**SEASON** Late summer to early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Acrid taste when young, poor texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Peppery Milk Cap has a long stem, smooth cap and crowded gills, *L.controversus* pink-buff cap patches and flesh-coloured gills.

## Oak Milk Cap

*Lactarius quietus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very common species always associated with oak. The broadly convex dry cap is centrally depressed when old and a dull red-brown colour with faint, concentric darker bands. The shortly decurrent creamy-brown, crowded gills age darker brown and exude a creamy-white milk. The slender stem is the same colour as the cap but darker near its base. It has a strange oily smell.

**SIZE** Cap 4-9 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 6-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Only found in the vicinity of oak trees.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Slight bitter taste, unpleasant smell.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Slimy Milk Cap grows with beech. Small Brown Milk Cap is smaller, lacks the cap zonation and is commonest under birch.

## Slimy Milk Cap

*Lactarius blennius*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species is commonly found in beech woods. The depressed cap is a strange mix of grey, olive and brown with concentric bands of darker spots. It is shiny and very slimy when moist. The shortly decurrent gills start cream but grey with age and on damage because the white milk dries grey. The stem is paler than the cap and slimy when young. There is no obvious smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 4-5 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, mostly with beech.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Slimy cap surface and very acrid taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The much larger, slimy-capped, Ugly Milk Cap is darker and typically grows under birch trees.

## **Ugly Milk Cap**

*Lactarius turpis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also called *L.plumbeus* due to its leaden colour, this large fungus has young convex caps which are olive-brown with a felty inrolled margin; the mature caps are dark-brown to black and flat or slightly depressed. It is sticky when moist. The shortly decurrent, creamy-buff, crowded gills are spotted with brown when old. They exude an abundant, acrid white milk. The stocky stem is the same colour as the cap, often with shallow pits.

**SIZE** Cap 7-20 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 20-30 mm.

**HABITAT** Under birch, often among leaf litter or grass.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not recommended due to its bitter taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Slimy Milk Cap. Mostly with beech.

## Rufous Milk Cap

*Lactarius rufus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is deep red-brown, dry and slightly rough, flat or shallowly depressed but with a central pimple. The gills are shortly decurrent, crowded, pale creamy-yellow, ageing to the same colour as the stem which is similar to that of the cap but paler. Damaged gills exude a white milk.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 6-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Under conifers but also with birch.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The initially mild tasting milk becomes very acrid after about a minute.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Curry-scented Milk Cap (*L.camphoratus*), similar in shape and colour but only half the size with watery white milk. *L.hepaticus* is dull red-brown with brownish red spotted gills and a white milk that dries yellow.

## Sweet Milk Cap

*Lactarius subdulcis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Medium-sized, it is rich red-brown when young but paler with age. The depressed centre remains darker. The crowded gills are only shortly decurrent and mature from cream to pinky-buff. The slender stem is a similar colour to the cap near its base but much paler at its apex. Damaged gills release lots of white milk which does not dry yellow (test on a handkerchief).

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, mostly with beech.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The milk initially tastes sweet but has a very bitter aftertaste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Small Brown Milk Cap is more common under birch and has an orange-brown cap with a central pimple and white milk which dries yellow.

## Small Brown Milk Cap

*Lactarius tabidus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The orange-brown cap soon flattens but usually has a central pimple and is often wrinkled near the middle. The shortly decurrent, yellow-brown, crowded gills release only small amounts of white milk when damaged. This dries yellow on a handkerchief. The stem narrows from its darker-coloured base to the apex.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** With broad-leaved trees and most common under birch in wet places, often among Sphagnum (bog) moss.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial with a slightly acrid taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The darker Sweet Milk Cap produces more plentiful milk which does not dry yellow.

## **Coconut-scented Milk Cap**

*Lactarius glyciosmus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A small Milk Cap easily recognised by its coconut smell. The cap colour varies from grey-lilac to pinky-brown. It has a dry, downy texture, thin flesh and an incurled margin when young. The crowded decurrent gills are flesh-coloured and produce small amounts of white milk when damaged. The stem is paler than the cap, becoming hollow and fragile with age.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, mostly with birch.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Used for flavouring but has a fairly hot taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger Grey Milk Cap (*L.vetus*) has a sticky cap and a milk which dries grey on the gills; these bruise pale brown.

## Woolly Milk Cap

*Lactarius torminosus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species causes griping pains if eaten without careful preparation. The cap is markedly funnel-shaped when fully grown, sticky at the centre when moist and with an inrolled margin which in young specimens has a texture of lambswool. The flesh-pink cap is marked with concentric, darker pink rings. The gills are pink, crowded and weakly decurrent. They exude a white milk. The pale pink solid stem matures hollow with some surface pits.

**SIZE** Cap 6-12 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** With birch on damp peaty soil.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Parboiled it is eatable but not edible.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *L.pubescens* has a paler, non-zoned cap. Saffron Milk Cap has orange gills and milk.

## Saffron Milk Cap

*Lactarius deliciosus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This beautiful fungus is infrequent in Britain. Its large funnel-shaped cap has an inrolled margin when young and is slightly sticky. It is cream to pinky-orange with concentric bands of deep orange and faint green patches when old. The bright orange gills are shortly decurrent, crowded and produce a carrot-coloured milk. The stocky hollow stem is marked on the surface with orange pits near its base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under pine trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Best blanched before being fried.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The commoner Spruce Milk Cap has a smooth stem.  
*L.salmonicolor* has a less zoned cap.

## Spruce Milk Cap

*Lactarius deterrimus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This species is frequently confused with Saffron Milk Cap but is much commoner, especially in spruce plantations. The yellow-orange cap is zoned with darker rings and old specimens or those exposed to frost show considerable greening. The shortly decurrent pale orange gills release a bitter orange milk which turns wine-red and finally dark green. The stem is only rarely pitted at its base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 3-7 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Under conifers; most often with spruce.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Cooking reduces the bitterness. Not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Saffron Milk Cap has orange pits at the stem base and a mild tasting orange milk.

**PLUTEUS FAMILY**

## Fawn Pluteus

*Pluteus cervinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species is an important wood rotter. The cap is mid to dark brown and smooth except for darker streaks, most prominent at the centre. The gills are free of the stem, crowded and initially white; later they take on a flesh-pink tinge as the pink spores mature. The solid, slender white stem is streaked with dark-brown fibres and swollen at the base. It has a faint radish smell.

**SIZE** Cap 6-12 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 8-12 mm.

**HABITAT** On broad-leaved stumps, logs and sawdust.

**SEASON** All year but most frequent in autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not highly rated due to its sharp taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Volvariella speciosa* also has free, pink gills but a creamy-brown cap. Stem emerges from a volva. Grows in rich grassland and on sawdust.

## **Veined Pluteus**

***Pluteus umbrosus***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Although not as common as Fawn Pluteus this beautiful fungus is frequent in the same habitat. The broadly convex sepia-brown cap is overlain with branching veins of dark brown, tiny velvety scales; especially near the centre. The crowded, free gills start white but mature pink with a dark brown edge. The pale brown stem has cap-like scales. It smells faintly of garlic.

**SIZE** Cap 4-9 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 8-12 mm.

**HABITAT** On stumps and rotting wood of broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Soft-fleshed and not highly recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Fawn Pluteus lacks the vein-like velvety scales on its cap. *P.leoninus* has a smaller, smoother, bright yellow cap

## ENTOLOMA FAMILY

## Silky Nolanea

*Nolanea sericea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This common species typifies the family with its pink gills and pink angular spores. It was previously called *Entoloma sericeum*. The convex cap expands flat with a central umbo. The young cap is moist, dark brown with a grooved margin, later fading from the centre to creamy-beige with a silky surface. The sinuate gills have a ragged edge and mature grey-pink; a pink spore print can be seen at the apex of the stem. It smells of meal.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-5 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** On lawns and short grass; often in troops.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Confusable with poisonous pink-spored species.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The Miller also smells of meal but has deeply decurrent, pale pink gills.

## Striated Nolanea

*Nolanea staurospora*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Like the previous species, older caps become flat and fade to pale ochre but staurospora has a more fleshy, bell-shaped, russet-brown young cap, sticky when moist and markedly striated near its margin. It has crowded, adnexed, pale pink gills. The slender stem is striated with grey fibres and broadens at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-5 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 3-6 mm.

**HABITAT** Poor pasture and grassy woods. Also on moorland.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Too easily confused with poisonous species.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger *Entoloma nidorosum* is found in damp places, often under willow. Pale brown cap has a striate margin and dries to a silky dirty-white. Distinctive smell like nitric acid or chlorine.

## White Leptonia

*Leptonia sericella*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The young convex cap has a broad central umbo but matures funnel-shaped with a central depression. It is dry, creamy-white and slightly rough. The gills, quite spaced, are initially adnate and white but age decurrent and pink. Stem slender, white and shiny. It has a pleasant mushroomy smell. Also called Alboleptonia sericella.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** Wet grassland and moorland.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Beware confusion with highly poisonous fungi.

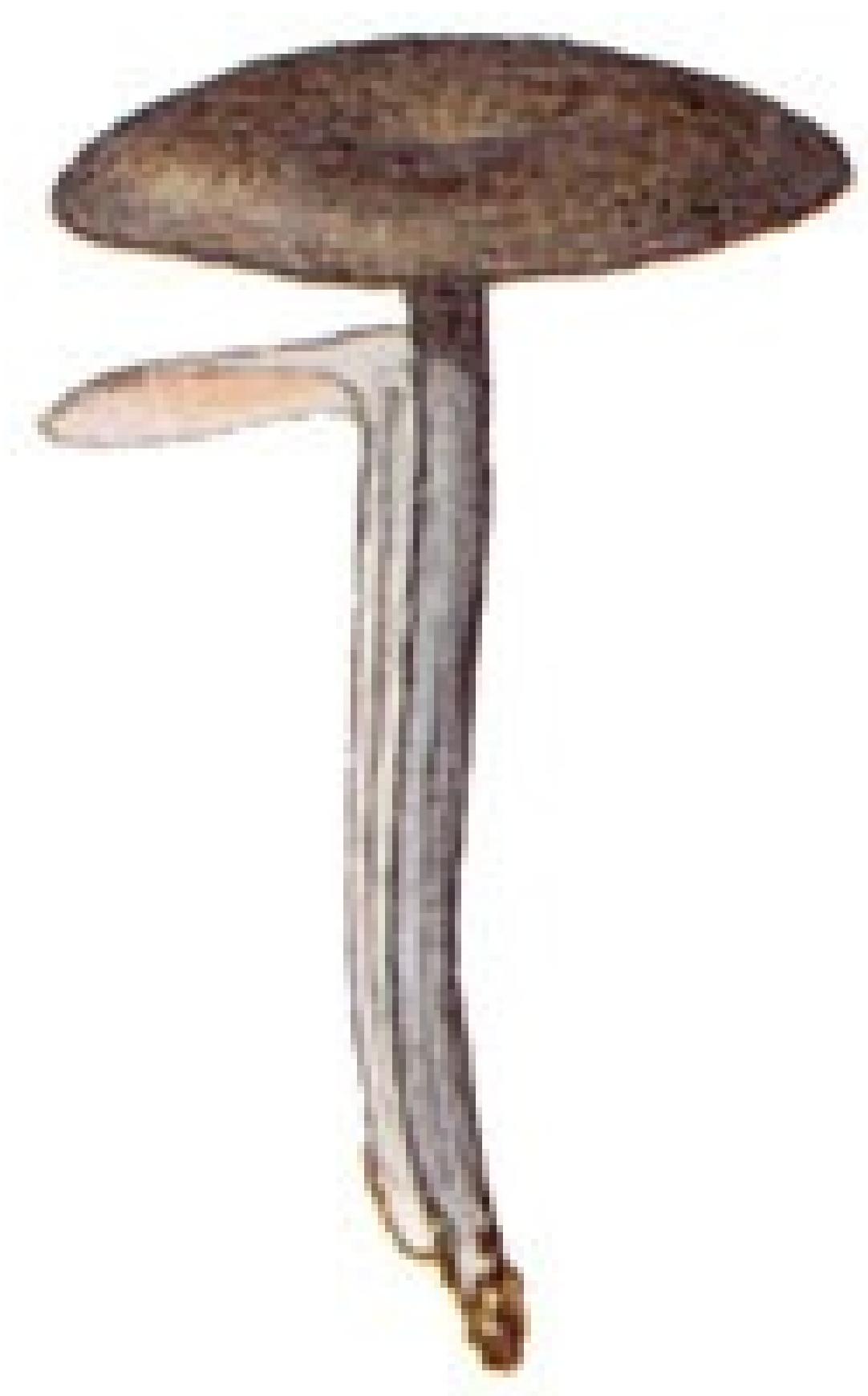
**SIMILAR SPECIES** The Miller has a mealy smell as does the very poisonous Ivory Clitocybe but this has crowded, white gills and a white spore print. Ivory Wax Cap has broad, distant gills.

## Blue Leptonia

*Leptonia corvina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

There are a number of small, dark blue species with pink spores which were previously placed in the Entoloma genus. The photograph shows the blue-black colour (the French describe it as crow-like) of young convex caps and the paler, flat older caps which have a roughly fibrous margin. The adnate white gills mature pale pink. The slender stem has a white base.

**SIZE** Cap 1-3 cm, stem 2-6 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In short grass, especially amongst moss.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Some blue Leptonias are poisonous, so avoid.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *L.serrulata* has grey-pink gills with a distinctive black edge and is more common in upland pasture. *L.lampropus* has a grey-brown cap and blue stem.

## Livid Entoloma

*Entoloma lividum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as *Entoloma sinuatum*, it has been mistaken for various edible fungi. The medium-sized, fleshy cap has a broad central umbo and a wavy, inrolled edge. The matt surface dries smooth and shiny. The colour varies from creamy-white through dirty-yellow to grey-brown. The sinuate gills age from straw-yellow to salmon-pink. The stem is stout and fibrous at the base. It has a mealy smell when young which later becomes more rancid.

**SIZE** Cap 6-18 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Field edges, open woodland on rich soil.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes gastric upset and liver damage.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** St George's Mushroom has a similar size, shape and smell but has white gills and spores.

## The Miller

*Clitopilus prunulus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The young creamy-white convex cap has an inrolled edge. Later it is funnel-shaped with a wavy edge. The deeply decurrent white gills mature pink. The short white stem is often not central. The fungus has a strong mealy smell and the cap feels like kid leather.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 3-4 cm x 6-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass including parkland and woodland.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Excellent; the firm flesh tastes of meal. Beware confusion with poisonous species (see below).

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The poisonous Ivory Clitocybe, though smaller, has a similar shape and habitat. Cap surface is glossy, the spores white and the weakly decurrent gills are white, not pink.

## Apricot Fungus

*Rhodotus palmatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This once rare species is now much commoner thanks to Dutch Elm disease providing large quantities of dead elm on which *Rhodotus* grows. The broadly convex cap is wrinkled and gelatinous. It starts deep pink with an inrolled edge but matures flatter and apricot-coloured. The sinuate, crowded gills are paler than the cap and have cross-connecting veins. The pale pink stem is often curved. The fungus smells of apricots.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 8-12 mm.

**HABITAT** On stumps and fallen dead wood; mostly on elm.

**SEASON** Early autumn to winter.

**INEDIBLE** The flesh has a very bitter taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Not easily confused with other species.

**BOLBITIUS FAMILY**

## Egg Yolk Fungus

*Bolbitius vitellinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A thin-fleshed, fragile little species, also known as the Cow-pat Toadstool. The young cap is distinctly conical and the centre is shiny, slimy and egg-yolk yellow; the margin paler and grooved. Older caps are flat, pale ochre-brown with a translucent edge. The straw-coloured gills mature rusty-brown. The delicate pale yellow stem is more slender when growing in long grass.

**SIZE** Cap 1-3 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Often solitary; on dung, rotting hay or straw, compost and well-manured grassland.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and with a slimy texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Fairy Parasol has black spores.

## Brown Bell Cap

*Conocybe tenera*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Common in short grass where it is frequently confused with other small brown-capped species. The orange to ochre-brown cap remains bell-shaped with a striate margin when moist but dries yellowy-cream. The crowded brown gills ascend to the stem apex. The delicate pale ochre stem has a powdered surface.

**SIZE** Cap 1-3 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass in lawns, pasture and open woodland.

**SEASON** Late spring to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Some related *Conocybe* species are not easily distinguished. Magic Mushroom has a pointed cap and almost black gills. Dung Roundhead has a rounded cap and dark brown gills.

## Spring Agaric

*Agrocybe praecox*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The small to medium-sized cap is broadly convex and a pale tan colour which soon fades to creamy-beige. A cream-coloured veil protects the gills on young specimens and then leaves remains at the cap margin and as a ring at the stem apex on older ones. The adnexed, crowded, cream-coloured gills mature dingy-brown. The stem is paler than the cap and has a bulbous base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 7-9 cm x 6-12 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass often in open woods and under hedges.

**SEASON** Spring to summer. Occasionally in autumn.

**EDIBLE** Must be well cooked; not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Can be confused with Field Mushroom. which has a fleshier cap and free gills which start pink but age very dark brown.

## **STROPHARIA FAMILY**

## Shaggy Pholiota

*Pholiota squarrosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The broadly convex, yellow-ochre cap is covered in concentric rings of upturned, triangular, red-brown scales. The margin remains inrolled. The crowded, straw-coloured adnate gills mature rusty-brown. The long, often curved stem narrows at its base. Below the scruffy ring are cap-like scales; above it is paler and smooth. It has a sharp radish-like smell.

**SIZE** Cap 4-12 cm, stem 6-15 cm x 7-15 mm.

**HABITAT** In clusters on stumps or standing dead wood of broad-leaved trees, especially beech and rowan.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The bitter flesh is difficult to digest.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P.flammans* is yellower as is the smooth *P.alnicola* (on alder and birch).

## Charcoal Pholiota

*Pholiota highlandensis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A small fungus frequently found on old bonfire sites hence its common name and the former Latin name, *P. carbonaria*. It has an orange-brown cap, shiny and slightly sticky with a paler, often wavy margin. The crowded, adnate gills are clay-brown with an olive tint. The stem is paler than the cap at the apex but darker near the base where it is covered in tiny red-brown scales. The ring zone soon disappears. It has no distinctive smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** In troops on charred wood and burnt ground.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The specific habitat of Charcoal Pholiota distinguishes it from related species.

## Brown Stew Fungus

*Kuehneromyces mutabilis*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Brown and shiny when moist, the cap dries pale tan – hence ‘mutabilis’ and the alternative common name, Two-toned Pholiota. The crowded, adnexed gills darken from cream to russet-brown. The slender, often curved stem is pale tan and smooth above the ragged ring (which often disappears) but dark brown from the small scales nearer its base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 4-8 mm

**HABITAT** In tufts on broad-leaved stumps and logs.

**SEASON** Spring to winter.

**EDIBLE** The caps add flavour and colour to stews.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The poisonous *Galerina marginata* grows singly on dead conifer wood. See also Velvet Shank and Sulphur Tuft.

## Sulphur Tuft

*Hypholoma fasciculare*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The young caps are bell-shaped, smooth and rich sulphur-yellow, with gills covered by a pale, cobweb-like veil. They are later convex with a tan centre and pale yellow margin, often bearing veil remnants, now darkened by the spores. The gills are crowded, initially yellow but later olive-green to black from the spores. The slender stem curves at its base. There is a purple-brown ring zone.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 5-12 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** In tufts on stumps and dead wood of broad-leaved trees; also on conifers.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**POISONOUS** Very bitter with a taste like quinine.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Brick Caps are darker. Velvet Shank, has a slimy cap and a velvet stem.

## Brick Caps

*Hypholoma sublateritium*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Similar to the previous species but with fewer in a tuft. The fleshy caps are brick-red near the centre and pale tan at the margin which typically bears white veil remnants. The creamy-yellow adnate gills mature grey-brown. The stem is yellow above the dark brown ring zone, increasingly red-brown below.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 8-12 mm.

**HABITAT** On tree stumps, dead wood and dead roots.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Less bitter than Sulphur Tuft but not edible.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The much less common *H.capnoides* has a slightly sticky, tan-coloured cap and grey gills when young. It grows on conifer stumps. Mild-tasting and edible but do not mistake for Sulphur Tuft.

## Verdigris Toadstool

*Stropharia aeruginosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Fresh specimens have slimy, shiny caps; young ones are dark, blue-green and bell-shaped, older ones more convex and grass-green. The cap margin is peppered with small white scales. Old caps lack slime and scales, fading to pale tan. The crowded, sinuate gills start pale grey but age purple-brown with a white margin. The stem is white above the transient ring (coloured by the purple-black spores); it is pale blue-green with white scales below (as cap margin).

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Among grass in woods and in pasture.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Fortunately the colour is offputting.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Specimens with smooth cap and stem are sometimes placed under *S.caerulea*.

## Dung Roundhead

*Stropharia semiglobata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very common small brown fungus with an unusual shape likened to half a marble on a match stick. The hemispherical, ochre cap rarely flattens and is slimy when moist, sticky when dry. The adnate crowded gills do not ascend before joining the stem. The young pale grey gills age dark brown. The pale yellow, slender stem is sticky below a transient ring.

**SIZE** Cap 1-3 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In and by dung in pasture and on manured soil.

**SEASON** Late spring to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and slimy-textured.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Dung-loving species of *Panaeolus* (Hay Cap & Petticoat Fungus) have bell-shaped caps and mottled brown gills. Magic Mushroom has a pointed cap, ascending gills and a wavy stem.

## Magic Mushroom

*Psilocybe semilanceata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Previously known as Liberty Cap, the new name came in during the 1960s along with its notoriety as a hallucinogen. The bell-shaped cap usually narrows to a point. Slimy and date-brown when moist, it dries pale straw, often with a furrowed margin. The crowded gills ascend to the stem apex. Initially grey, they mature almost black with a white edge. The slender wavy stem blues at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 0.5-1.5 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass (lawns, playing fields, pastures.)

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Affects sensory perception. Unpleasant taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P.coprophila* and *P.merdaria* grow on dung. Brown Bell Cap has ochre-brown caps and gills. See also *Panaeolus* (Hay Cap & Petticoat Fungus).

## CORTINARIUS FAMILY

## Red-banded Cortinarius

*Cortinarius armillatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

There are hundreds of species of *Cortinarius*. One of the more frequent, *C. armillatus* has a rust-coloured, fleshy cap with slightly darker fibres near the centre and red-brown veil remnants at the margin. It has adnate rusty-brown gills. The chunky, pale tan stem is encircled by one or more orange-red bands and is swollen at its base.

**SIZE** Cap 6-12 cm, stem 6-15 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Mostly with birch on acid heathland.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Some species (see below) are very poisonous.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. speciosissimus* has a smaller cap and yellow veil remnants on a tawny stem. With conifers.

## Purple Cortinarius

*Cortinarius purpurascens*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The cap is broadly convex, wavy-edged and a mix of grey-brown and violet. There is a cobweb-like veil (cortina) with purple hue. The young adnexed, purple gills brown with age as the spores develop. The broad cap-coloured stem has a swollen base and bruises violet. The flesh is purple with a fruity smell.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 6-12 cm x 15-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

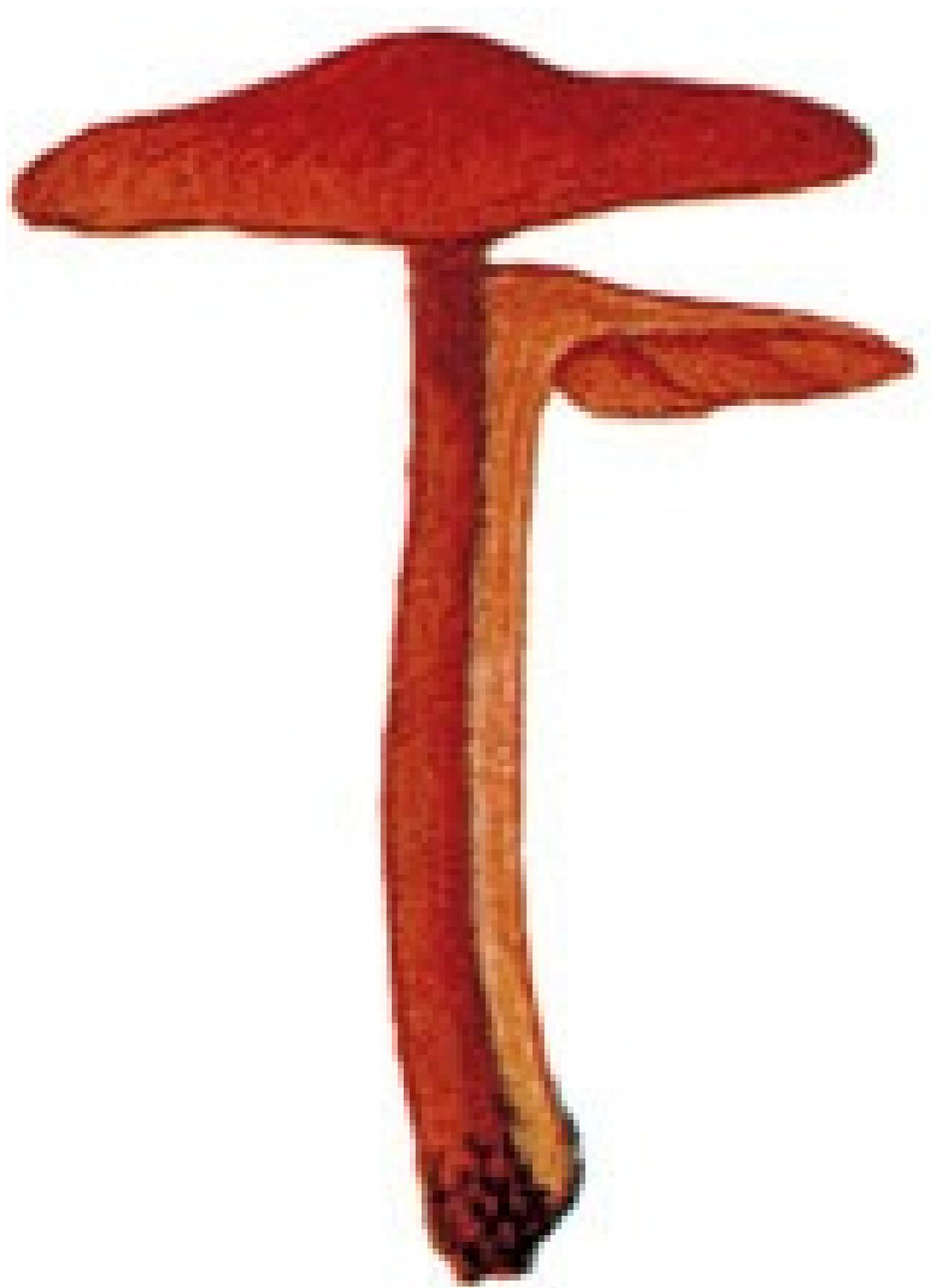
**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Reported to produce digestive upset, so avoid.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. violaceus* has a dark violet cap, gills and stem. The pale brown *C. largus* has blue tints on the cap and gills. *C. pseudosalor* has a sticky brown cap, violet-edged brown gills and violet stem base.

## Blood-red Cortinarius

*Cortinarius sanguineus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as *Dermocybe sanguinea*, it grows under conifers unlike the very similar *C. puniceus* shown in the photograph which grows with broad-leaved trees. The cap is covered in silky fibres. The red gills darken as the rusty-brown spores mature. The stem base is covered in a pale down.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 3-8 mm.

**HABITAT** *sanguineus* conifers; *puniceus* broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**POISONOUS** Confusable with the very poisonous *C. orellanus*.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. semisanguineus* has red gills but a yellow-brown cap and stem. *C. cinnabarinus* (under beech) has all parts orange-red. *C. orellanus* is orange-yellow.

## Red-staining Inocybe

*Inocybe patouillardii*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

*I.patouillardii* is one of the largest woodland Inocybes with a fleshy, silky, conical cap. Typically cream to straw-coloured, it ages brick-red on the radiating fibres and when bruised. The crowded, adnexed gills start pale pink but age olive-yellow and bruise brick-red as does the stout white stem. The smell is fruity, later becoming foetid and unpleasant.

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm, stem 3-10 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass at woodland edges; mostly on chalk.

**SEASON** Late spring to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes death by heart failure or asphyxiation.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The edible St George's Mushroom has white gills, does not stain red and smells of meal.

## Straw-coloured Inocybe

*Inocybe fastigiata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Its conical cap often splits at the margin when expanded but retains a raised, pale brown central area. The rest of the cap is straw-yellow and covered with grey-brown, radiating fibres. The gills are crowded and olive-brown. The slim, pale stem is not swollen at its base. Also known as *Inocybe rimosa*.

**SIZE** Cap 3-7 cm, stem 5-8 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved woods especially with beech.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Dangerous due to its muscarine content.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *I. maculata* has darker brown fibrils and white down at the cap centre. *I. asterospora* also has brown fibrils but a fawn-coloured stem with a very swollen base.

## Common White Inocybe

*Inocybe geophylla*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This little fungus occurs in both a white form and with a lilac cap and stem in var.lilacina (Lilac Inocybe). The conical cap flattens but keeps a central umbo. The adnate, crowded gills mature from cream to dirty-brown. The thin stem is covered with silky fibres.

**SIZE** Cap 1-4 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 3-4 mm.

**HABITAT** Gregarious, often by paths in woods.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Dangerous as it is easily confused with edibles.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Both forms look like Bell Caps (Bonnet Bell Cap-Orange Bell Cap) which have white spores. Lilac Inocybe is confused with Amethyst Deceiver but this has distant purple gills and white spores. *I. griseolilacina* is paler lilac and has small brown scales at the cap centre.

## Poison Pie

*Hebeloma crustuliniforme*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A common brown fungus which beginners find difficult to identify. The convex, pale tan, smooth cap is sticky when moist, with an inrolled margin. The sinuate grey-brown gills have a pale margin which exudes drops of water (not easily seen). The apex of the tan stem is covered with mealy white scales which rub off with handling. Sharp smell of radish or freshly cut potato.

**SIZE** Cap 4-10 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, often in rings.

**SEASON** Early autumn to early winter.

**POISONOUS** Very bitter, causing gastric upset.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller *H. anthracophilum* is darker, has a pliable stem and grows on burnt ground. *H.sinapizans* has a dry tan cap and a swollen stem base.

## Dark-centred Hebeloma

*Hebeloma mesophaeum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as Pine Mesophaeum, it grows under conifers and broad-leaved trees. The broadly convex cap is slimy and a rich chestnut-brown at the centre, pale creamy-brown at the margin. The crowded pinky-brown, sinuate gills are protected by a cobweb-like veil when young. The white stem sometimes has a faint brown ring zone (veil remnants) about halfway up and widens to a brown base. It has a faint smell of radish.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 5-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Under conifers and other trees especially birch.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Avoid as related species are poisonous.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *H. pusillum* has a similar cap colour but clay-brown gills. Under willows.

## Rusty Wood Rotter

*Gymnopilus penetrans*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This attractive fungus is rusty or tawny-brown on its cap, gills and stem. The medium-sized, bell-shaped cap soon flattens but often has a wavy margin. It is thin-fleshed and with a dry silky feel. The crowded pale-yellow, adnate to weakly decurrent gills darken with age and discolour with rust-coloured spots. The golden stem is darker below its middle and has a white, woolly base. Young stems bear a fibrillose ring.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 5-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Conifer stumps, logs and chippings.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and with bitter-tasting flesh.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Spectacular Gymnopile is much larger. In tufts on dead wood of broad-leaved trees.

## Spectacular Gymnopile

*Gymnopilus junonius*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Previously known as *Pholiota spectabilis*, its large, dry, fleshy convex cap retains a broad umbo after expanding. A vivid golden-orange, it is covered by tiny flattened, similar-coloured, fibrous scales. The adnate yellow gills age rusty-orange. The thick stem is often broader in the lower region before narrowing to a root-like base. Young specimens have a shaggy ring covered with rusty spores.

**SIZE** Cap 6-15 cm, stem 6-18 cm x 15-30 mm.

**HABITAT** In clusters from the base of broad-leaved trees. Also on stumps and rotting logs.

**SEASON** Summer to early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Bitter. Wrongly recorded as hallucinogenic.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Pholiota alnicola* is smooth and yellow.

## Moss Pixy Cap

*Galerina vittiformis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Moss Pixy Cap has a bell-shaped shiny, russet-brown cap, with a ribbed margin. The adnate gills are rust-coloured with a white edge. The slim tan stem is browner near the base and covered with a bloom near the apex.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 1-2 mm.

**HABITAT** Among moss in woods, heaths and grassland.

**SEASON** Spring to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Too small to be worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Also growing in moss, *G. hypnorum* has a honey-brown cap and a mealy smell. *G. paludosa* is dull-brown and odourless. Orange Moss Agaric has decurrent white gills and white spores.

## **MUSHROOM FAMILY**

## **Field Mushroom**

*Agaricus campestris*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is the best-known of about 40 species of Agaricus. The young (button) white cap is firm, smooth and domed. It expands flat and the centre may bear small, pale brown scales and the initially inrolled margin, untidy veil remnants. The young gills are protected by a white veil; they are crowded and free. They change from deep pink through brown to black. There is a transient ring on the stocky white stem. It has a pleasant smell.

**SIZE** Cap 3-10 cm, stem 3-7 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Short grass in lawns, parks and pasture.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn; following rain.

**EDIBLE** Excellent. Can be eaten raw but see below.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Yellow Staining Mushroom is poisonous to some; it has an unpleasant smell.

## Cultivated Mushroom

*Agaricus bisporus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The shop mushroom is uncommon out of cultivation but too well-known to ignore. It is very similar to Field Mushroom but the mature caps are typically darker due to a covering of brown, fibre-like scales. The crowded free gills are pink in young specimens; very dark brown in old flat caps. The stem bears a more permanent, large white, shaggy ring. Unlike Field Mushroom, the cut flesh reddens slightly.

**SIZE** Cap 3-10 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** In rich soil, dung heaps and mushroom compost.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Can be eaten raw. Older ones have more flavour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The brown-capped variety is similar to some of the Wood Mushrooms (Bleeding Brown Mushroom).

## Horse Mushroom

*Agaricus arvensis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A large fleshy species smelling of aniseed or bitter almonds. The deeply domed young white cap matures flat. Mostly smooth but may break up into scales at the margin. Older caps have an ochre tinge and flush dull yellow-ochre when bruised. The free grey gills mature dark-brown. The white stem also bruises yellow-ochre. The swollen base does not yellow when cut. It has a large two-layered ring, the lower part star-shaped.

**SIZE** Cap 5-20 cm, stem 5-15 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Permanent pastures and road verges; often in rings.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Excellent flavour and texture but see below.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See the poisonous Yellow Staining Mushroom.

## Yellow-staining Mushroom

*Agaricus xanthodermus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species causes sickness and diarrhoea in a substantial minority. The button stage is unusual in that it is flat-topped. The white cap is minutely scaly at the centre and on bruising rapidly turns bright yellow, especially near the margin. The young white gills turn grey-pink and finally dark brown. The white stem bears a large, down-turned ring and a swollen base; the cut flesh of which turns chrome-yellow. It has an unpleasant smell, like ink or stale urine.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 10-18 mm.

**HABITAT** In grassland, gardens, hedgerows and woods.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Many are unaffected but best avoided.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *A. silvicola* (Wood Mushroom) stains yellow but not in the cut stem.

## **Bleeding Brown Mushroom**

*Agaricus haemorrhoideus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The hazel-brown cap surface breaks into small fibrous scales. The pale pink, free gills age darker and bruise red on handling. The tall, hollow white stem is minutely scaly below the large floppy brown ring and bruises dark red. The cut flesh in the stem and cap also reddens. It has a faint mushroomy smell.

**SIZE** Cap 8-12 cm, stem 8-10 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In leaf litter of broad-leaved woods.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**EDIBLE** Good to eat despite the ‘bleeding flesh’.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Brown Wood Mushroom (*A. silvaticus*) grows under conifers. The stem and large scaly cap of The Prince (*A. augustus*) stain yellow on bruising; the flesh does not redden and smells of almonds. Edible.

## INK CAP FAMILY

## Shaggy Ink Cap

*Coprinus comatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Young specimens show little stem beneath the finger-shaped, smooth white caps which become rugby-ball shaped with a smooth, dirty-brown apex; the rest breaks up into white or pale brown shaggy scales. The cap base expands and dissolves into an inky fluid, resulting in a small flat cap on a long stem. The crowded, free gills hang down and change from white through pink to black. The smooth, white hollow stem has a transient ring.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 8-30 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Grass, woodland vegetation and urban sites.

**SEASON** Spring to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Must be eaten young. Good salty flavour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Common Ink Cap and Magpie Ink Cap.

## Common Ink Cap

*Coprinus atramentarius*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The grey to fawn cap is initially egg-shaped, later bell-shaped. The smooth surface breaks into a few tiny scales at the apex; the margin is often wavy and split. The ascending gills mature from white to grey and finally black when they dissolve into an inky fluid. It has a smooth, hollow white stem with an ill-defined ring zone.

**SIZE** Cap 4-8 cm, stem 5-15 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Gregarious from tree stumps or in grass, gardens, pavements - wherever buried wood is present.

**SEASON** Spring to early winter.

**POISONOUS** It reacts with alcohol in the bloodstream causing nausea and hot flushes.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The woodland *C. acuminatus* is smaller.

## Magpie Ink Cap

*Coprinus picaceus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The young, finger-shaped white cap is similar to that of Shaggy Ink Cap but as the stem lengthens the cap becomes more bell-shaped and the white breaks into patches on a dark brown background. The pale pink ascending gills turn black and dissolve into an ink-like fluid. The white stem has a slightly frosted surface and lacks a ring. It smells of tar.

**SIZE** Cap 6-10 cm, stem 10-20 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees, mostly with beech.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Unpleasant smell. Possibly poisonous.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The much smaller, more common *C. cinereus* grows on dung and manure. White scales mostly confined to the apex of the grey-black, conical cap.

## Rusty Carpet Ink Cap

*Coprinus domesticus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Beginners often confuse this with Glistening Ink Cap but the shaggy, rust-coloured vegetative strands at the stem base help to separate them. The bell-shaped, tan-coloured cap has a rusty-brown apex dusted with white granular scales and a grooved margin. The crowded white gills age dark grey with a purple tint before dissolving. The smooth white stem has a swollen base.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 4-5 mm.

**HABITAT** On dead wood and stumps of broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Early summer to early autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The less common *C. xanthothrix* also grows from a rust-coloured mat but has pale brown cap scales. Glistening Ink Cap lacks the rust mat.

## Glistening Ink Cap

*Coprinus micaceus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

More easily identified from young specimens when the ochre-brown, bell-shaped caps are dusted with similar-coloured, glistening, mica-like grains. The older caps lose these and the grooved margin often splits and turns up. The crowded pale gills age brown then black before dissolving into a black fluid. The white stem browns at its base.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 5-8 cm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** In dense clusters on broad-leaved stumps and logs. Also from dead roots.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**EDIBLE** Hardly worthwhile; poor flavour and texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Frequently confused with Rusty Carpet Ink Cap which has white grains and grows from a rust-coloured mat.

## Fairies' Bonnets

*Coprinus disseminatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This tiny fungus would probably pass unnoticed but for the fact that it grows in very large groups; often several hundred together. The young, oval-shaped, pale beige caps mature bell-shaped, markedly grooved and greyer, though the apex remains brown. The pale grey gills darken with age but show little of the autodigesting (dissolving to an inky fluid) of other Ink Caps. The spindly, fragile grey-white stem has a downy base.

**SIZE** Cap 0.5-1.5 cm, stem 2-4 cm x 1-2 mm.

**HABITAT** Large clusters on and near rotting wood.

**SEASON** Spring to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Too insubstantial to be worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The habit of growing in such large groups distinguishes it from other related species.

## Fairy Parasol

*Coprinus plicatilis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very delicate fungus common in short grass and unusual for an Ink Cap in having a cap which finally flattens and shrivels rather than dissolving to a black ink. Initially pale tan, the paper-thin, ribbed, translucent cap turns grey apart from a brown central disc. The thin, spaced, grey-black gills radiate from a collar round the easily broken, tall slender stem.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In short grass and among woodland herbs.

**SEASON** Spring to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Far too insubstantial to be worth collecting.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** A number of related species, e.g. *C. leiocephalus*, have browner caps and are found beneath trees or in hedgerows.

## Common Crumble Cap

*Psathyrella candolleana*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Only old caps show the dark gill and spore colour, so they are frequently confused with white and pink-spored species. This one has a thin-fleshed, ochre-yellow cap which soon flattens and dries pale cream, especially near the margin which frequently splits and bears dark veil remnants. The gills are crowded, adnexed and initially white then lilac-grey before turning dark brown. The cap does not dissolve. The stem is thin, white and brittle.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 5-8 cm x 3-5 mm.

**HABITAT** In tufts near broad-leaved tree stumps.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Said to be edible if cooked but not worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** There are many Crumble Caps; most grow in small groups on soil or among grass.

## Two-toned Crumble Cap

*Psathyrella hydrophila*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A densely tufted species, common on stumps. The neatly convex young caps are a beautiful, shiny date-brown with small white veil fragments at the margins. As the cap ages it flattens and dries pale tan from the centre, giving a two-toned appearance. The young, pale brown, crowded gills blacken as the spores mature. The fragile, smooth white stem darkens near its base.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 5-8 mm.

**HABITAT** In dense clusters on broad-leaved tree stumps, dead roots and other debris.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended due to bitter taste.

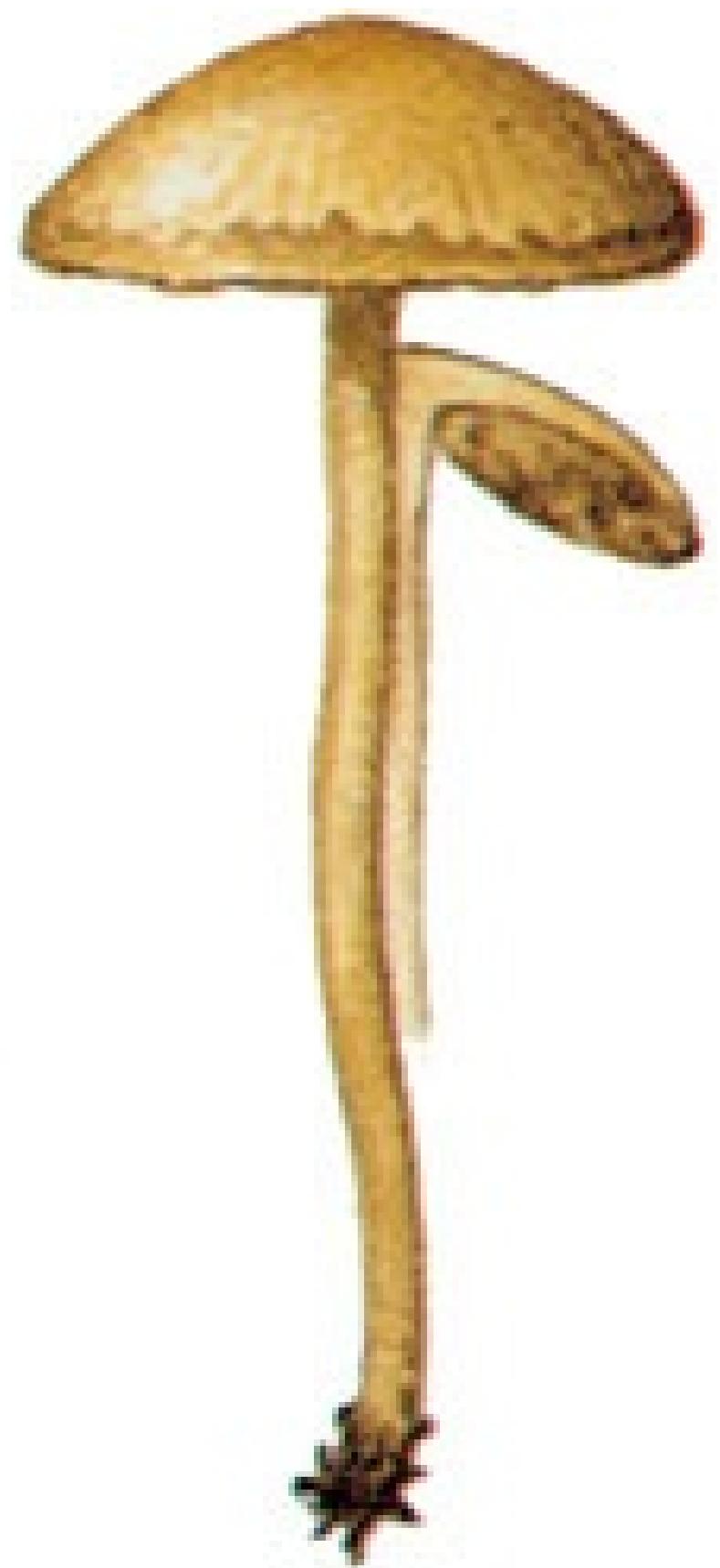
**SIMILAR SPECIES** Brown Stew Fungus is also tufted on stumps but has a ring and scaly brown stem base.

## Hay Cap

*Panaeolus foenisecii*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Like the previous species, this has a two-toned, brown, convex cap. As the picture shows some may be all date-brown and others much paler. The ascending pale brown gills later become mottled with black patches from the ripe spores. The stem is slender, smooth and brown. Also called *Panaeolina foenisecii*.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** Among short and mown grass.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** May produce hallucinations.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P. rickenii* has a bell-shaped, red-brown cap and a white bloom on its dark brown stem. Brown Bell Cap has rusty-brown gills. Magic Mushroom has a pointed cap and unmottled dark brown gills.

## Petticoat Fungus

*Panaeolus sphinctrinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A common small grassland species usually growing on dung, it gets its name from the cap margin which is fringed with triangular, white veil fragments. The deeply bell-shaped cap varies from grey to almost black when moist but dries grey-brown. The adnate brown gills are mottled with black patches (its alternative name is Grey Mottle Gill). The grey-brown, stem is long, slender and covered with a white bloom in the upper region.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 6-12 cm x 2-3 mm.

**HABITAT** In grazed grassland; on or near dung.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** May produce hallucinations.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Some authors consider browner-capped specimens with fewer veil remains to be *P. campanulatus*.

## Egg-shell Toadstool

*Panaeolus semiovatus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Found on horse or cow dung, this is much larger than the two previous species in the same genus. The cap remains bell-shaped with an uneven surface. It is creamy-ochre; sticky when moist and shiny when dry – like an egg-shell. The ascending brown and black, mottled gills have a paler edge. The creamy-white stem bears a ring, later blackened by the spores.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 5-15 cm x 4-8 mm.

**HABITAT** On horse and cow dung or in gardens on manure.

**SEASON** Summer to early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Its dung habitat makes it unsuitable for eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other common *Panaeolus* species are smaller, darker and lack a ring.

## Weeping Widow

*Lacrymaria velutina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The broadly convex yellow-brown cap maintains a central umbo. When young it is covered with darker fibres and has a shaggy margin due to veil fragments which blacken as the spores develop. The crowded adnate gills are mottled brown and black with a white edge. In moist weather watery droplets are exuded near the junction of gill and stem. The stem has brown fibres and a ring zone blackened by the spores. Listed in some books as *Psathyrella lacrymabunder*.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 6-10 cm x 6-10 mm.

**HABITAT** In lawns, grassy woods and bare soil in fields.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** Firm-fleshed if a little bitter.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Common Crumble Cap is much paler.

**BOLETE FAMILY**

[Cep](#)

***Boletus edulis***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Cep or Penny Bun has densely-packed tubes in place of gills. The young, deeply convex caps are often wrinkled and narrower than the broad stem but expand to a large, fleshy, shallow dome-shape. The cap is mid-brown with paler patches and sticky when moist. The pores (tube ends) are small and white, ageing straw to olive-yellow. The very swollen pale brown stem is overlain by a raised, white honeycomb network most obvious at the apex.

**SIZE** Cap 8-30 cm, stem 8-25 cm x 4-10 cm.

**HABITAT** Woodlands; with oak, beech, birch and pine.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Young ones can be pickled. Old ones dry well.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Bay Bolete and Bitter Bolete.

## Bay Bolete

*Boletus badius*



S. Cleland



S. Cleland

Also known as *Xerocomus badius*. The cap is shiny, chestnut or bay-horse coloured; it is sticky and darker when wet. Cylindrical stem, streaked with cap colour. The pores are large, angular and pale yellow, rapidly turning blue-green on bruising. The pale yellow flesh blues faintly when cut.

**SIZE** Cap 7-15 cm, stem 5-12 cm x 20-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Broad-leaved or coniferous (especially Scots pine) wood on acid soil.

**SEASON** July to November.

**EDIBLE** Excellent and firm-fleshed when young. Pleasant mushroomy taste. Rarely maggot-infested. Dries well.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Red-cracked Bolete and Yellow-cracked Bolete. The paler Cep has a raised network on its broader stem.

## Red-cracked Bolete

*Boletus chrysenteron*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very common Bolete, also known as *Xerocomus chrysenteron* with a shallowly convex yellow-brown, dry cap which later cracks to reveal a pink-red layer just below the surface. The large, angular yellow pores age olive and bruise blue-green. The cylindrical stem is pale yellow at its apex but flushed red towards the base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees in woods and gardens.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended due to its soggy texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Yellow-cracked Bolete has no red on the stem or beneath the cracks on the cap. *Boletus pruinatus* has a red-brown cap with smaller, pale yellow pores which bruise blue.

## Yellow-cracked Bolete

***Boletus subtomentosus***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species, often placed in the genus *Xerocomus* has a pale olive-yellow to light brown, dry cap with a velvety feel. At maturity the surface cracks to reveal the pale yellow flesh. The golden-yellow, angular pores are larger close to the stem and age olive-yellow. It blues faintly when bruised. The creamy-yellow stem often bends and narrows near its base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-10 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended due to its poor flavour and a soggy texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** A very variable species and darker forms look like Bay Bolete while some forms look like Red-cracked Bolete.

## **Dotted-stemmed Bolete**

*Boletus erythropus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A large, solid Bolete with yellow flesh in the cap and stem which rapidly turns dark blue on cutting. The fleshy, broadly convex cap is usually dark olive-brown with a velvet surface when young; later smooth and glossy. The small, round yellow pores mature deep orange-red and bruise dark blue. The yellow, club-shaped stem bruises blue and is covered with tiny red-brown dots in the lower region.

**SIZE** Cap 8-20 cm, stem 6-12 cm x 20-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved or coniferous trees, commonly on neutral or acidic soils.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes stomach upset especially when raw.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Lurid and Devil's Bolete (Lurid Bolete).

## Lurid Bolete

*Boletus luridus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The yellow-brown fleshy cap bears tubes with orange-red pores which, like the cap, stem and cut flesh, bruise blue-green. The broad stem is yellowish at the top but most of the rest is covered by a purple-red, longitudinally elongated net.

**SIZE** Cap 8-14 cm, stem 5-12 cm x 15-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Under beech, oak or lime on chalky soils.

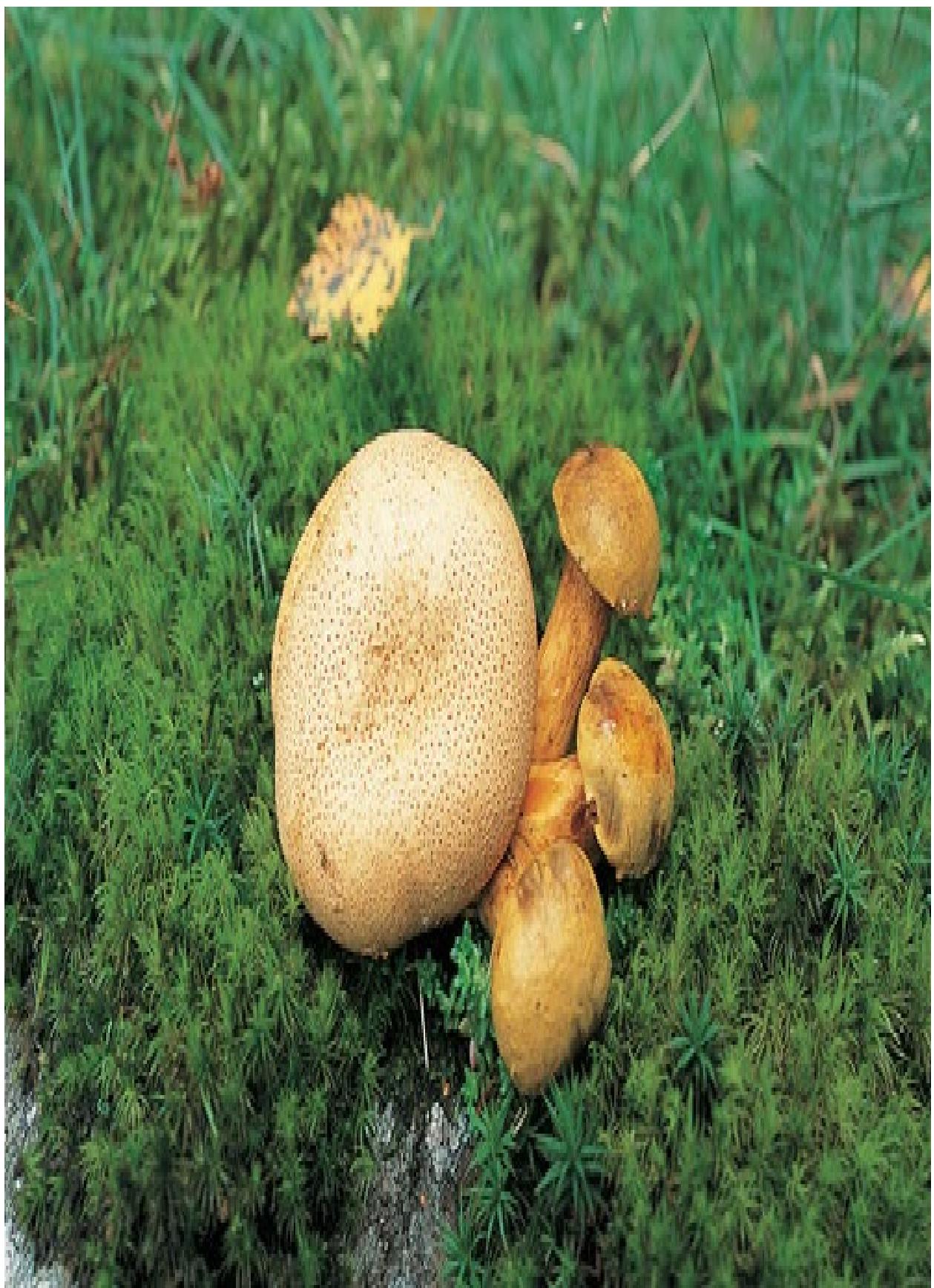
**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes digestive upset and produces unpleasant symptoms with alcohol.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Devil's Bolete (*Boletus satanus*) has a large creamy-brown, wavy-margined cap. Small yellow-red pores bruise blue-green, cut flesh smells unpleasant and slowly blues, stem has a very swollen base and a red net. Causes severe sickness but is not fatal.

## Parasitic Bolete

*Boletus parasiticus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This small, infrequent Boletus is instantly recognisable as it is always found attached to Common Earth Ball which it parasitises. The pale, olive-brown dry cap is initially velvety but cracks on maturity. The margin remains inrolled until old. The large, angular, golden-yellow pores age red-brown. The yellow-brown stem often narrows at its base and curves from the underside of its earthball host. Also known as *Xerocomus parasiticus*.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 3-6 cm x 8-12 mm.

**HABITAT** Singly or in small tufts on Common Earthball.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended as it is quite rare.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None; the only parasitic Boletus.

## **Bitter Bolete**

*Tylopilus felleus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

A frequent species which when young can be mistaken for Cep. The domed mid-brown cap has a wavy edge which often overlaps the marginal tubes. The tiny white pores turn flesh-pink as the spores mature. The club-shaped, pale ochre stem is covered with a brown raised honeycomb network. The white cap flesh is odourless but tastes very bitter.

**SIZE** Cap 5-14 cm, stem 6-14 cm x 20-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Under both conifers and broad-leaved species (especially beech and oak), often on acid soils.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Extremely bitter taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Cep is a similar colour but the pores age olive-yellow and the stem bears a white network.

## Peppery Bolete

*Chalciporus piperatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Previously known as *Boletus piperatus*, it is smaller than most common Boletes. The orange-brown, smooth cap is slightly sticky when moist but frequently cracks when dry and has a wavy margin. The cap flesh is yellow. The small rusty-brown pores are larger and more angular close to the stem which is often off-centre to the cap. The stem is red-brown, narrowing markedly to a bright yellow base.

**SIZE** Cap 3-6 cm, stem 3-8 cm x 8-15 mm.

**HABITAT** Common under birch or pine on sandy soil. Also with beech and oak.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Used to add flavour but is very peppery.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None with such a hot taste.

## Orange Birch Bolete

*Leccinum versipelle*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Species of *Leccinum* differ from *Boletus* in having tiny scales on a longer stem. When young, *versipelle* has a rounded, firm, brick-red cap; this matures to a large, convex, orange-brown, dry cap, often with a shaggy edge. The pores are small, round and dirty white; they age pale brown. The long stem tapers from a swollen base; white, covered by small brown or black scales. The firm, pale pink flesh turns blue-grey when cut and black on cooking.

**SIZE** Cap 12-25 cm, stem 12-20 cm x 30-40 mm.

**HABITAT** Under birch in open woods and scrub.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn, often after rain.

**EDIBLE** Caps make good eating; discard the stems.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Less common species with red-brown stem scales grow with oak, aspen and poplar.

## **Brown Birch Bolete**

*Leccinum scabrum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Commoner than the preceding species with a dull, grey-brown smaller, spongy-textured cap and no overhanging margin. The tubes round the stem are much shorter than elsewhere. The tiny grey pores bruise pale brown. The cylindrical white stem is peppered with tiny brown-black scales. The white, soft flesh does not change colour on cutting or cooking.

**SIZE** Cap 5-10 cm, stem 8-15 cm x 20-30 mm.

**HABITAT** Under birch; locally abundant.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Soggy. Only young caps are worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Easily confused with Orange Birch Bolete; this is larger, firmer and has flesh that blues on cutting. *L. roseofractum* has a dark brown cap and flesh that turns dark pink on cutting.

## Larch Bolete

*Suillus grevillei*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Species of *Suillus* are distinguished from those of *Boletus* or *Leccinum* by their slimy caps and larger pore size. Larch Bolete (was *Boletus elegans*) has a slimy, golden-yellow cap which dries glossy. The pores are large, angular and initially covered by a pale yellow veil which forms a ring on the stem. This drops off, leaving a paler area above which the yellow stem is scurfy.

**SIZE** Cap 4-12 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 12-18 mm.

**HABITAT** Under or close to larch, often in rings.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Remove slimy cap skin. Best in soups.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *S. aeruginascens* has a wrinkled, grey-yellow cap; *S. tridentinus* has compound orange pores. Slippery Jack is brown and grows under pine.

## Slippery Jack

*Suillus luteus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The only common slimy-capped Bolete with a persistent ring. The chestnut-brown cap finally dries smooth and shiny. The yellow pores are initially covered with a white veil; they brown with age and on bruising. The stem is pale yellow and scurfy above the floppy ring; creamy-brown below. The flesh is pale yellow and soft.

**SIZE** Cap 6-12 cm, stem 5-10 cm x 15-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under pine trees on well-drained soil.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Remove slimy skin. Lacks flavour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Related species growing under pine include Shallow-pored Bolete and *S. granulatus*: both lack a ring and the latter exudes milky droplets from its pores and granular stem.

## Shallow-pored Bolete

*Suillus bovinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

As the common name suggests, this has a thin cap; the Latin name refers to the oxen or Jersey cow-like colour of the slimy cap which dries shiny with a paler margin. The large, angular, olive-yellow pores are frequently subdivided and are elongated near the stem where the tubes are slightly decurrent. The smooth cap-coloured, cylindrical stem lacks a ring and often bends at the base.

**SIZE** Cap 4-12 cm, stem 4-10 cm x 10-15 mm.

**HABITAT** In grass, moss and heather under Scots pine.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Poor flavour and rubbery texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger, yellower Larch Bolete grows with larch. Peppery Bolete grows with pine but has a dry, matt cap and a peppery taste.

**PAXILLUS FAMILY**

## **Brown Roll-rim**

*Paxillus involutus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The very common Brown Roll-rim has a convex young cap which finally becomes flat and even funnel-shaped but retains a shaggy inrolled margin. The soft gills are easily removed from the cap, which is olive to rust-brown and slimy at the centre when moist. It bruises darker as do the very crowded, decurrent, forking brown gills and the pale brown stem which narrows from the apex.

**SIZE** Cap 7-15 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees in woods and heaths; often with birch. Locally abundant.

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** Causes sickness and more serious illness.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Velvet Roll-rim.

**Velvet Roll-rim**

***Paxillus atromentosus***



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

In contrast to Brown Roll-rim this is a wood rotter and grows on old conifer stumps. The large, chunky, irregular cap has a semicircular or shell-like outline. It is flat or centrally depressed, with an inrolled, smooth margin. The dingy brown surface is dry and velvety when young, smoother with age. The decurrent crowded, creamy-yellow gills fork near the short broad, velvety, brown-black stem which is often laterally attached.

**SIZE** Cap 8-25 cm, stem 4-8 cm x 20-50 mm.

**HABITAT** Clustered on or near conifer stumps, mostly on pine.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Bitter and similar to Brown Roll-rim.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Brown Roll-rim.

## False Chanterelle

*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Frequently mistaken for Chanterelle despite growing in different habitats. The dry, rather downy, funnel-shaped cap has an inrolled margin and depressed centre. Thin-fleshed, the whole fruitbody is orange-yellow but dries darker. It also occurs as a paler variety. The decurrent gills are thin, crowded and frequently forked. The slender stem is often off-centre, narrowing to the base which often curves.

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 5-8 mm.

**HABITAT** Mostly under conifers or on acid heaths.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**POISONOUS** A minority suffer from sickness and hallucinations.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Chanterelle has a paler, chunkier cap and stem with shallow wrinkles instead of gills.

**CHANTERELLE FAMILY**

## Chanterelle

*Cantharellus cibarius*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Chanterelle is collected for its culinary value. The convex cap, thick-fleshed and egg-yolk yellow; expands flat and finally funnel-shaped with an inrolled, wavy margin. It has coloured, blunt-edged deep wrinkles, with cross veins, which divide and reunite. These replace the normal gills and run down on to a solid stem. It has a fruity smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-10 cm, stem 2-8 cm x 8-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees (e.g beech, oak, or birch), also under pine; often among moss on slopes.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Mildly peppery taste goes well with egg dishes. Can be eaten raw. Small ones pickle well.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See False Chanterelle.

## Tubed Chanterelle

*Cantharellus tubaeformis*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This occasional species grows in troops, mostly under conifers. Previously called *C.infundi-buliformis* it has a depressed, navel-like cap which, unlike Chanterelle, is thin-fleshed, lacks an inrolled margin and is usually yellow-brown. The decurrent, forked wrinkles (in place of gills) start yellow but mature orange-grey and run on to the tall, slender, hollow, flattened, orange-yellow stem. There is little or no smell.

**SIZE** Cap 2-5 cm, stem 5-8 cm x 5-10 mm.

**HABITAT** In troops, mostly under conifers.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**EDIBLE** A poorer version of Chanterelle.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Yellow forms look like Chanterelle but this has a solid stem and fleshier cap.

## Horn of Plenty

*Craterellus cornucopoides*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

The cap of this strange fungus is shaped like a trumpet's horn with a split, wavy, rolled edge. The inside is dingy-brown while on the outer (under) surface there are no gills, the black leathery surface turning pale grey as the spores mature. The stem is merely a hollow extension of the tube-like cap. Also called Trumpet of Death.

**SIZE** Cap and stem 2-8 cm wide, 4-10 cm tall.

**HABITAT** In troops among leaf litter of beech or oak.

**SEASON** Summer to early winter.

**EDIBLE** A favourite in restaurants where it is served stuffed, but it is leathery and best used dried to add a rich flavour to soups and stews.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The much rarer *C. cinereus* differs in producing spores from black, Chanterelle-like wrinkles.

## **OYSTER MUSHROOM FAMILY**

## Oyster Mushroom

*Pleurotus ostreatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Increasingly cultivated, its flat, moist, slate-blue or oyster-coloured caps are fan-shaped with an inrolled margin. They dry grey-buff or cream. Decurrent crowded, white to pale straw gills radiate from the point of attachment where they may fork. Small lateral stem, downy when young.

**SIZE** Cap 5-18 cm, stem 2-3 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** In overlapping clusters on living trunks, dead stumps and logs of broad-leaved trees; rare on conifers.

**SEASON** Late autumn and through the winter.

**EDIBLE** Good flavour and firm-fleshed. Cut out stem area.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P. pulmonarius* is less substantial. See next two pages for species which can be confused with Oyster Mushroom.

## **Branched Oyster Mushroom**

*Pleurotus cornucopiae*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The round or oval caps are creamy-brown and darker at the depressed centre. The significant stem is attached nearer to one side of the cap and is almost covered by a continuation of the off-white gills. These regularly fork and reunite over the stem which fuses with many others at its base.

**SIZE** Cap 5-12 cm, stem 2-7 cm x 15-30 mm.

**HABITAT** Clustered on dead elm; also on beech.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn.

**EDIBLE** Tougher and less tasty than Oyster Mushroom.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P. dryinus* mostly on oak with a scaly cap and marginal veil fragments. Oyster Mushroom is greyer and lacks the significant branched stem and reuniting gills. It fruits later in the year.

## **TRICHOLOMA FAMILY**

## Olive-brown Panellus

*Panellus serotinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The fan- or kidney-shaped, fleshy cap has an inrolled margin when young. The colour varies; it is initially yellow-orange then olive-green and finally (especially after frost) bronze-brown. It is slimy when moist but dries velvety. The crowded orange-yellow gills are darker near the short, broad, yellow-brown, felty, lateral stem.

**SIZE** Cap 3-12 cm, stem 1-2 cm x 10-20 mm.

**HABITAT** Overlapping tufts on stumps and dead wood of both broad-leaved (e.g. beech) and coniferous trees.

**SEASON** From late autumn through the winter.

**INEDIBLE** Slimy cap may cause digestive upset.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P. stipticus* has small, dry, brown caps. See also Oyster Mushroom.

## CREPIDOTUS FAMILY

## Soft Slipper Toadstool

*Crepidotus mollis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The common name refers to its soft texture; the Latin name reminds us of the pancake-like shape of this bracket-like fungus. The pale brown, kidney-shaped cap, with a slimy covering and grooved margin, dries smooth and cream-coloured. The crowded white gills fan out and turn brown as the spores mature. The stem is lateral or absent.

**SIZE** Cap 2-7 cm across, (no stem).

**HABITAT** Overlapping tiers on dead trunks and stumps of broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

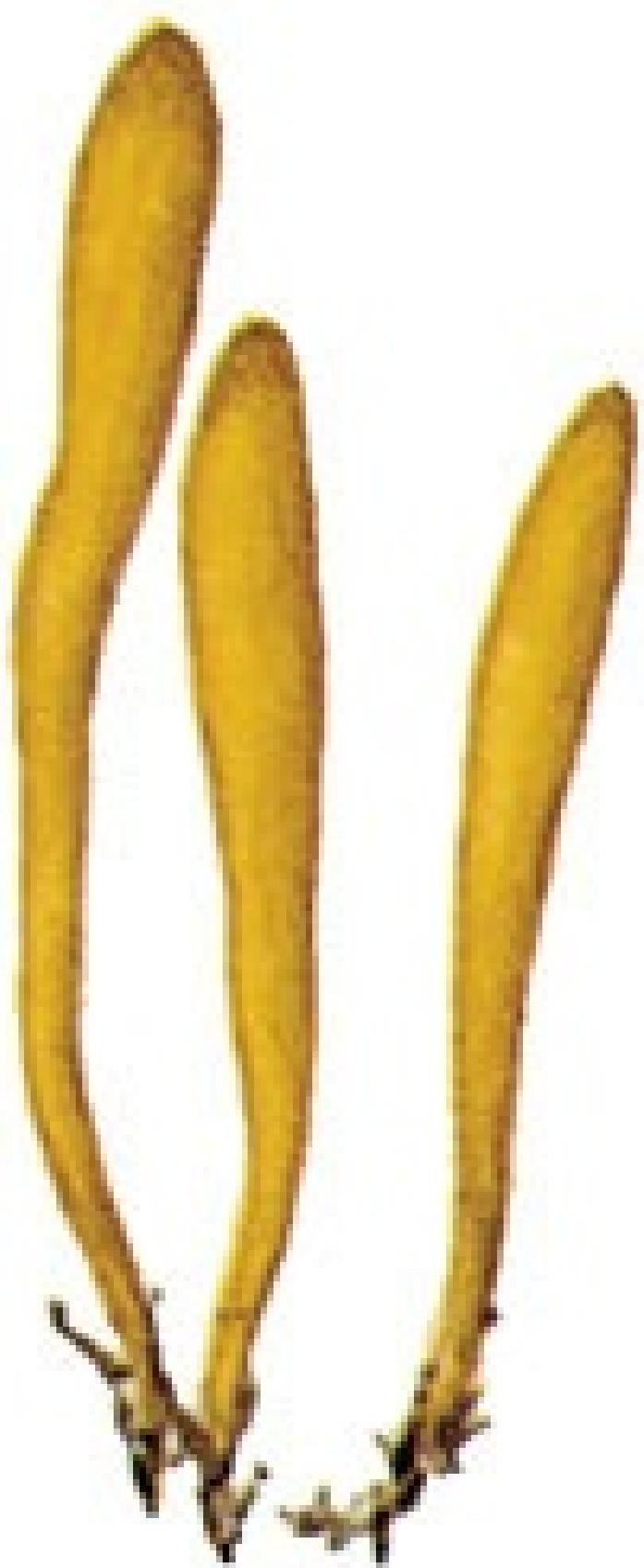
**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and slimy textured.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Can be confused with Oyster Mushroom but this is much larger and has white gills. Olive-brown Panellus has yellow gills.

**FAIRY CLUB FAMILY**

## Orange Clubs

*Clavulinopsis helvola*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is one of the commonest of a group of grassland fungi with club-shaped fruitbodies the size of a matchstick. The unbranched, orange-yellow club is flattened near the rounded apex and narrows to the base. The spores are borne on the smooth surface.

**SIZE** 2-6 cm tall, 2-4 mm wide.

**HABITAT** In short grass, often among moss. Also among herbs in broad-leaved woods. In small groups.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial with a bitter taste.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Golden Spindles (*Clavulinopsis fusiformis*), taller and bright yellow, has pointed tips. *Clavulinopsis corniculata* has branched yellow clubs. White Spindles (*Clavaria vermicularis*) is tufted and unbranched.

## CLAVULINA FAMILY

## Crested Coral Fungus

*Clavulina cristata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

*Clavulina and Ramaria species have branched, coral-like fruitbodies. This, the commonest species is usually white, densely branched and with flattened branches ending in pointed, crest-like tips. It is soft and easily broken. Darker forms with greyer tips are confusable with Grey Coral Fungus.*

**SIZE** 2-8 cm tall, 2-6 cm wide.

**HABITAT** Solitary or gregarious on soil. Often among leaf litter under broad-leaved or coniferous trees.

**SEASON** Midsummer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Not recommended as often infected with mould.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Grey Coral Fungus. The larger, rarer, pale pink *Ramaria botrytis* is more finely branched and has deep red, bitter-tasting tips.

## Grey Coral Fungus

*Clavulina cinerea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is very similar to the previous species but slightly larger and the much branched, coral-like fruitbody is grey-brown. The branches are often flattened and the ends are blunt or rounded but not pointed.

**SIZE** 3-10 cm tall, 2-8 cm wide.

**HABITAT** In broad-leaved or coniferous woods, usually among leaf litter.  
**Solitary or in small groups.**

**SEASON** Midsummer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** Insubstantial and not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Often difficult to separate from Crested Coral Fungus which usually has pointed branch ends. The rare *Thelephora palmata* has more purple-brown branches and a strong smell of onion.

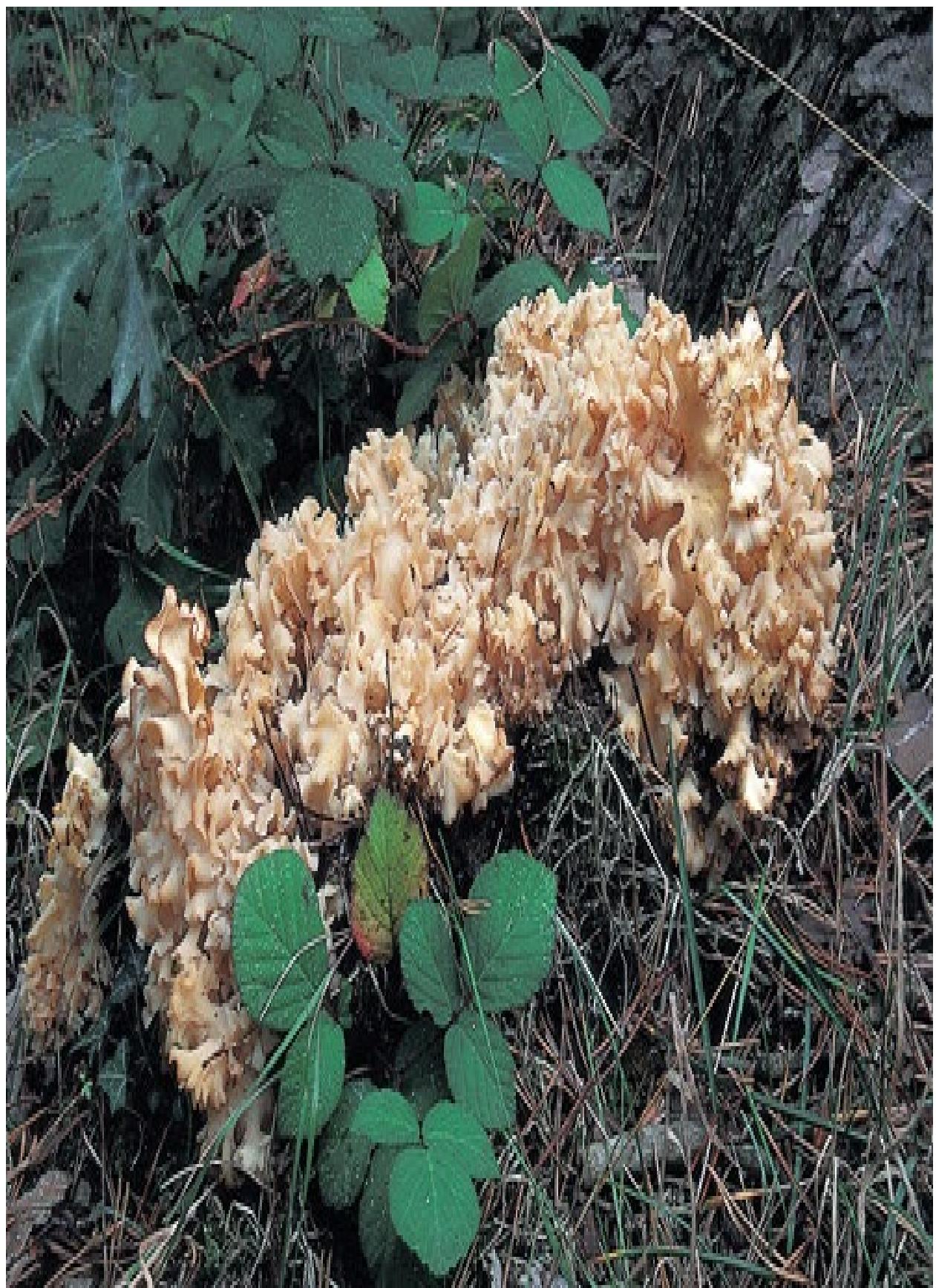
## **CAULIFLOWER FUNGUS FAMILY**

## Cauliflower Fungus

*Sparassis crispa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Similar in size and appearance to a human brain or cauliflower, the fruitbody is composed of many vertical, flattened, leaf-like lobes. When young and brittle these are cream-coloured with pale yellow tips but they age brown and tougher. The fleshy basal stem is often partly buried and root-like. It has a slightly sweet smell and tastes of hazelnuts.

**SIZE** 10-20 cm tall, 15-40 cms wide.

**HABITAT** On the ground close to living trunks or dead stumps of conifers; mostly with Scots pine.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Young, well-washed specimens have a marvellous taste and texture. Must not be eaten when old.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Hen of the Woods has horizontal lobes with pores on the underside and grows on or near oak.

## **HYDNUM FAMILY**

## Hedgehog Fungus

*Hydnum repandum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species has spines (stalactite-like projections) from the cap in place of gills. It has a medium-sized, fleshy, creamy-buff cap with an inrolled, often wavy or irregular margin. Neighbouring caps may coalesce. The spines are paler than the cap, crowded, brittle and continuing on to the top of the short stocky stem which is often not centrally attached.

**SIZE** Cap 6-14 cm, stem 4-6 cm x 15-25 mm.

**HABITAT** Under both broad-leaved (especially beech) and coniferous trees; often in troops.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**EDIBLE** Slightly bitter when raw but excellent after cooking, with a firm texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *H. rufescens* is smaller and more orange-red.

## **EAR-PICK FAMILY**

## Ear-pick Fungus

*Auriscalpium vulgare*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A curious little fungus growing on old pine cones. The thin dark brown cap is shaped like an ear and the convex surface is coarsely velvety and often channelled to the laterally attached stem. In place of gills there are tiny (2-3 mm), grey-brown spines which hang down like stalactites. The slender, cap-coloured stem has a bristly surface.

**SIZE** Cap 1-2 cm, stem 2-6 cm x 1-2 mm.

**HABITAT** Singly or in small groups on decaying (often buried) cones of pine and occasionally spruce.

**SEASON** Mostly autumn but appearing all year.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Two other common fungi fruit on cones - *Strobilurus esculentus* (spring) and *Baeospora myosura* (autumn) but these have gills, not spines.

**EARTH FAN FAMILY**

## Earth Fan

*Thelephora terrestris*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

With no cap, stem or gills, its fruitbody consists of flattened, soft, grey-brown, fan-shaped lobes which frequently fuse to give a rosette appearance. The lobes are either semi-erect in a shallow bowl-shape or flat and encrusting twigs and plant stems. The upper surface is radially zoned and felty with a paler, irregularly fringed margin. The smooth, lower spore-bearing surface is cinnamon-brown and wrinkled.

**SIZE** In patches, 3-20 cm across.

**HABITAT** On soil or needle litter under conifers; also under broad-leaved trees and on heaths.

**SEASON** Summer to late autumn.

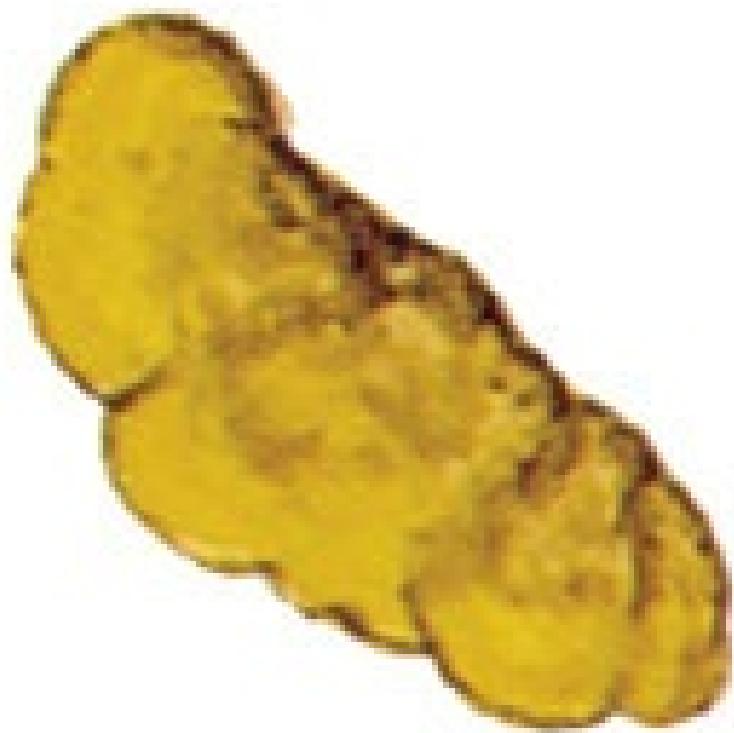
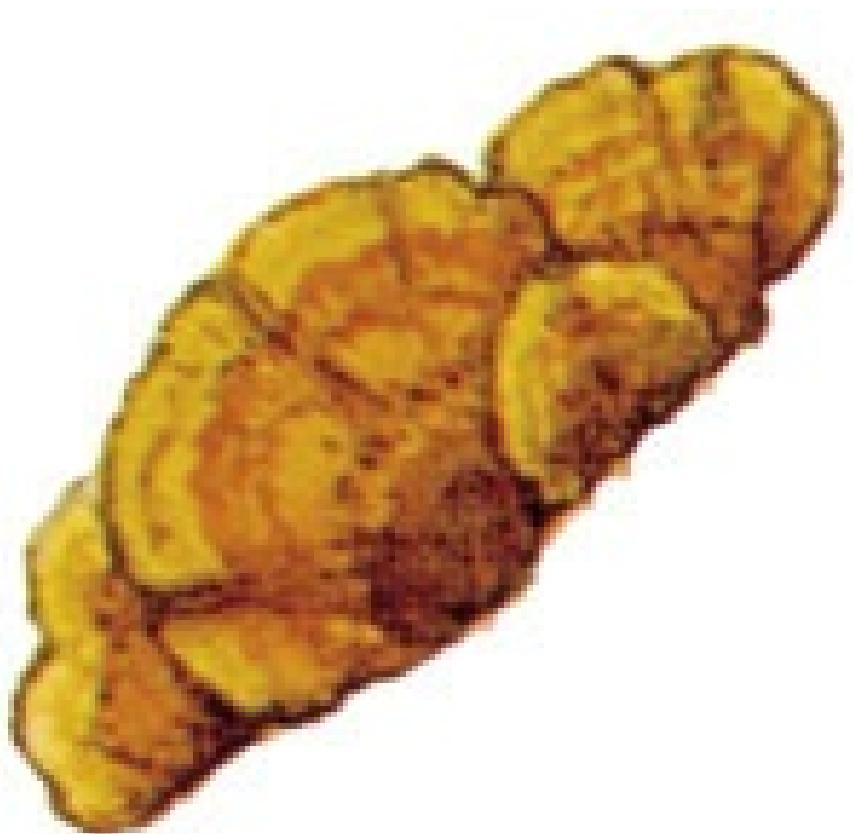
**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Hairy Stereum grows on wood.

## **BRACKET FUNGI**

## Hairy Stereum

*Stereum hirsutum*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This forms encrustations and rows of small, thin, tough semicircular bracket-like caps which frequently fuse with their neighbours. The zoned upper-side is roughly hairy and ranges from yellow-orange to grey-brown (frequently green with algae when old). The paler, broader, undulating margin is hairless. The lower, spore-bearing surface is smooth and initially bright yellow-orange but fades grey-brown.

**SIZE** Individual caps are 2-6 cm across, 2-3 mm thick.

**HABITAT** Tiered on stumps, dead standing and fallen wood of broad-leaved trees; also on posts and other timbers.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and leathery

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Bleeding Stereum. Many-zoned Polypore has tiny pores on its creamy underside.

## Bleeding Stereum

*Stereum rugosum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Bleeding Stereum is usually found as a hard flat crust which forms large patches on dead wood. The margins occasionally turn up to form tiny brackets. The pale ochre surface is initially smooth and flat but becomes uneven and may crack when dry. Fresh specimens bruise red and bleed a red juice when scratched; hence the common name.

**SIZE** Patches 2-20 cm across, only 1-2 mm thick.

**HABITAT** Crusts on dead wood of broad-leaved trees especially hazel, birch, beech and oak.

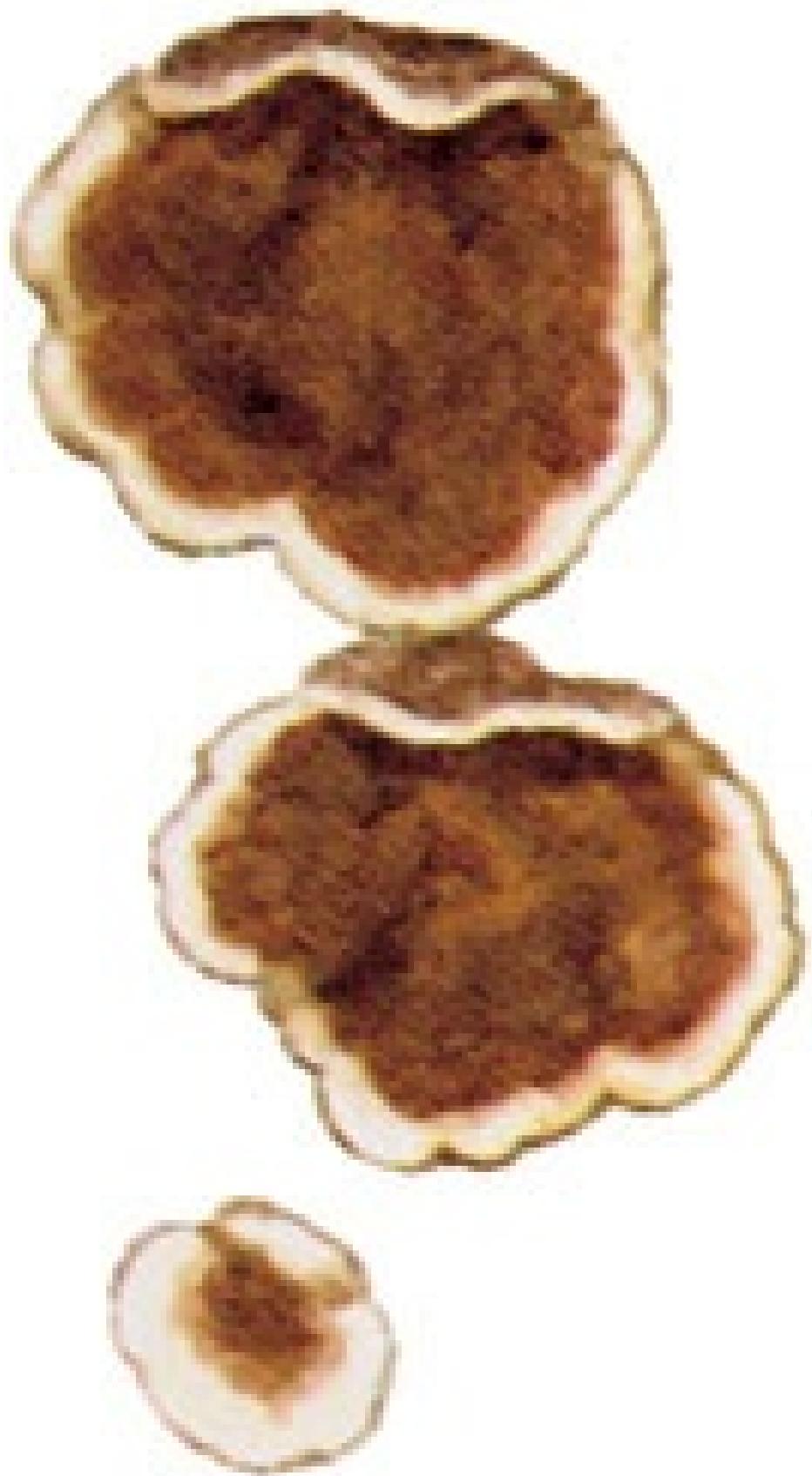
**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Hard and tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other bleeders include the red-brown *S. gausapatum* on oak; it regularly forms small brackets and *S.sanguinolentum* which grows on coniferous wood.

## Silver Leaf Fungus

*Chondrostereum purpureum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species occurs as a flat crust which turns up to produce small, leathery bracket-like caps. These have faintly zoned, hairy, pale grey upper surfaces with pale undulating margins. When young the underside, like the crust region, is smooth or finely wrinkled and a striking pink-violet colour, fading to dark brown. Previously called *Stereum purpureum*.

**SIZE** Patches to 15 cm across, brackets 2-4 cm across.

**HABITAT** Tiered on dead wood of broad-leaved trees. On living wood of rowan and fruit trees where it causes 'silver leaf'.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Very tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Violet Fir Bracket has pores and grows on conifers.

## Violet Fir Bracket

*Trichaptum abietinum*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Previously known as *Hirschioporus abietinus*, its small thin brackets grow in many-layered tiers on dead conifer wood. The upper surface is hairy, grey-brown, undulating, concentrically zoned and grooved. It may turn green from entrapped algae. The margin and pored underside is bright violet when young but fades to chocolate-brown. The pores become more elongated with age.

**SIZE** Patches to 30 cm x 30 cm. Brackets 2-4 cm across.

**HABITAT** Overlapping tiers on dead conifer wood including sawn logs.  
Mostly on larch, pine, spruce and fir.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The purple-tinged Silver Leaf Fungus is smooth below and grows on broad-leaved trees.

## Many-zoned Polypore

*Coriolus versicolor*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Very common, with semicircular or kidney-shaped thin, leathery brackets. The upper wrinkled surface is slightly hairy and shows contrasting concentric zones of black, grey and brown with a paler, undulating margin. The pored underside is creamy-white to pale ochre. Also called *Trametes versicolor*.

**SIZE** 2-7 cm across, 2-5 cm broad x 1-5 mm thick.

**HABITAT** On stumps, logs and standing dead wood. Also on living wood; mostly on broad-leaved trees. Usually in large overlapping groups.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Like dried leather.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The pale tan *C. hirsuta* is less clearly zoned and more hairy. See also Hairy Stereum.

## Grey Polypore

*Bjerkandera adusta*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This forms crust-like patches on the underside of branches but many overlapping, thin, pliable brackets on upper or vertical surfaces. The grey-brown bracket is faintly zoned with a whitish margin which ages black. The pored underside is pale grey, with a white margin but blackens on bruising and with age.

**SIZE** Brackets 2-6 cm across, 4-7 mm thick.

**HABITAT** Tiered on dead wood and damaged areas of broad-leaved trees, especially on beech.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** With a leathery texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The dark grey pores help distinguish this species from other small brackets including *B. fumosa* which has cream-coloured pores.

## Jelly Rot

*Merulius tremellosus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This strange, soft bracket has a moist gelatinous texture. It can be pancake-like but usually forms small brackets at its margins. The thick felty upperside is creamy-white with a pink tinge and has a thinner, almost translucent margin. The underside appears to be pored but is in fact a mix of folds and deep wrinkles. It is a striking orange-pink when fresh.

**SIZE** Individual brackets 2-4 cm across but frequently coalescing.

**HABITAT** Rotten wood on stumps and fallen trunks. Mostly on broad-leaved trees.

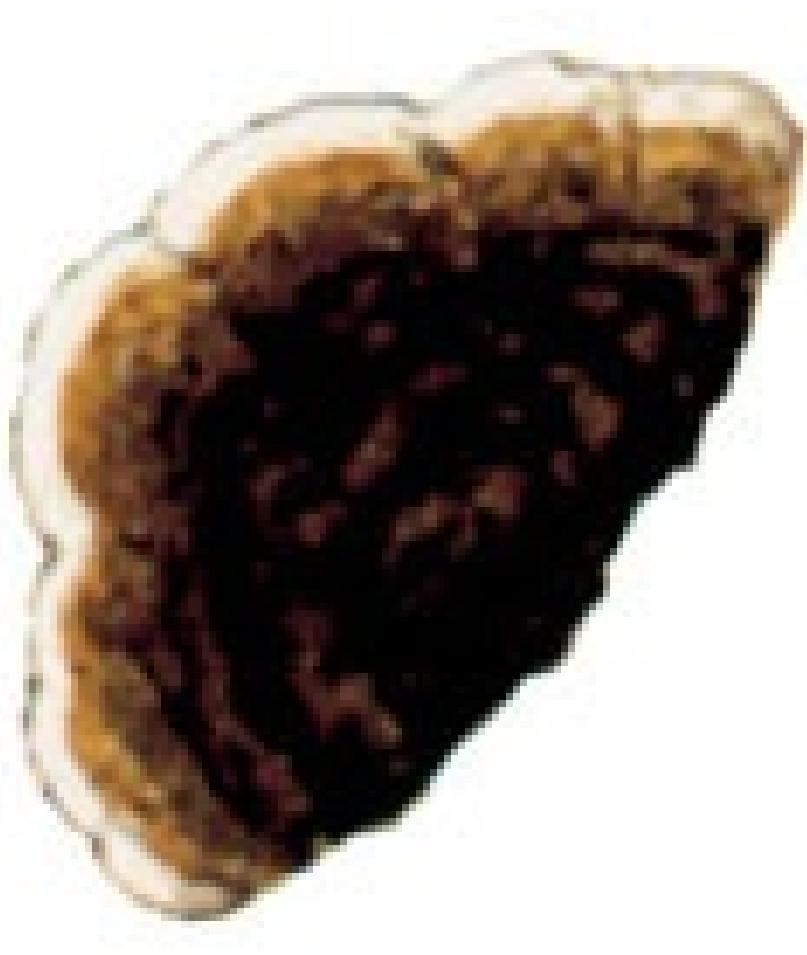
**SEASON** Commonest in summer and autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Soft but insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Phlebia radiata* forms soft, grey, wrinkled crusts with bright orange edges.

## Root Fomes

*Heterobasidion annosum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A serious parasite of conifers, especially spruce, the fruitbodies are formed from the lower trunk/upper root zone where the brackets are often partly hidden by moss and grass. It is crust-like but also produces small, irregular, elongated lobes. These are dark brown to black, with a hard lumpy surface and a wavy margin showing the white of the underside which is covered with small angular pores. If cut open older fruitbodies show annual layers of tubes.

**SIZE** Up to 15 cm across, 8 cm broad and 4 cm thick.

**HABITAT** With conifers; mostly at the base of spruce trees.

**SEASON** Throughout the year as it is perennial.

**INEDIBLE** Very hard.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None in the same habitat.

## Hump-backed Polypore

*Pseudotrametes gibbosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This medium-sized fungus forms semicircular brackets which are much thicker and humped at their point of attachment. The white upper side has a slightly velvety lumpy surface. Old specimens become browner and are frequently green in the middle from encrusting algae. The creamy-white pores on the underside are unusual in being elongated into thick-walled slots. Also called *Trametes gibbosa*.

**SIZE** 10-20 cm across, 6-15 cm broad, 1-5 cm thick.

**HABITAT** On dead broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Tough even when young.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Blushing Bracket has a thinner, brown bracket with pores that bruise pink on handling.

## **Blushing Bracket**

*Daedaleopsis confragosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A medium-sized fungus with a semicircular-shaped, tough fruitbody with an uneven, concentrically zoned, radially streaked, ochre-brown upper side; paler at the margin. The white underside ages grey-brown but bruises dark pink-red. The large pores are round and angular, some slit-like others maze-like.

**SIZE** 4-14 cm across, 4-8 cm broad, 1-3 cm thick.

**HABITAT** On living or dead broad-leaved trunks and branches. Mostly on willow and alder.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Tough, becoming woody.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Hump-backed Polypore also has elongated pores but a whiter, more uneven upperside and it does not flush red when bruised.

Maze Gill

*Daedalea quercina*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Commonest on oak stumps, this hard, corky bracket is unusually thick at its point of attachment. Above it is grey-brown and uneven. Below, the beige pores are greatly elongated (the walls appearing like thick gills) and form a labyrinth or maze-like pattern. (In Greek mythology Daedalus had to find his way through a labyrinth.)

**SIZE** 8-16 cm across, 4-8 cm broad, 2-5 cm thick.

**HABITAT** On dead wood of oak; rare on sweet chestnut.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Has a very hard texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller, thinner *Lenzites betulina* grows mostly on birch. The creamy-ochre underside has much thinner, more regular, gill-like plates.

## **Birch Polypore**

*Piptoporus betulinus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very common parasite on birch which continues to grow on the dead wood. White, smooth and rounded when young, it later develops a convex, kidney or semicircular shape. It is thicker at the lateral point of attachment, which is narrow and stem-like. The white upper side ages brown or grey and often cracks. The margin remains inrolled until maturity. The white underside is punctuated with tiny round pores. Also known as Razor Strop Fungus.

**SIZE 8-30 cm across, 5-20 cm broad, 2-6 cm thick.**

**HABITAT On trunks and branches of living or dead birch.**

**SEASON Throughout the year. Fruitbodies persist.**

**INEDIBLE The tough flesh has a bitter taste.**

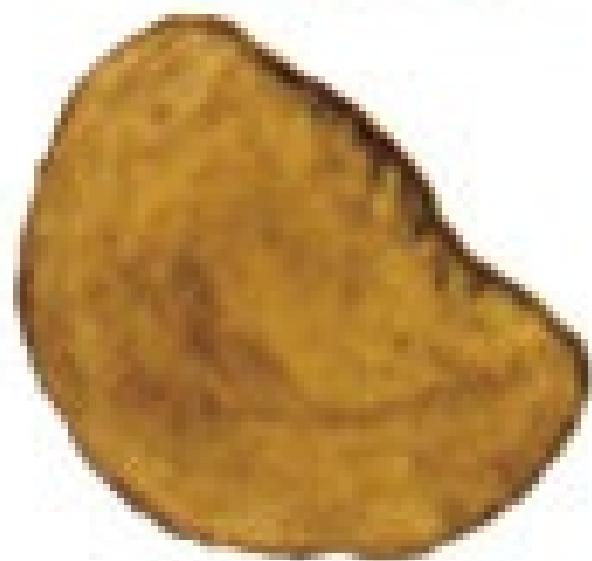
**SIMILAR SPECIES See Hoof Fungus - also on birch.**

## Hoof Fungus

*Fomes fomentarius*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A very hard, broadly attached, perennial fruitbody; successive annual layers of tubes produce a hoof-like shape often as deep as it is wide. The upper side is smooth, pale grey with darker concentric bands and ridged with concentric furrows. It has a very broad, rounded margin. The underside has minute pores, initially pale grey-brown but later dark brown. The pale brown leathery flesh was used when lighting fires; hence its other name - Tinder Fungus.

**SIZE** 7-40 cm across, 5-20 cm broad, 7-20 cm deep.

**HABITAT** On dead or dying birch; also on beech.

**SEASON** Any time - fruitbodies live for many years.

**INEDIBLE** As tough as the wood it grows on!

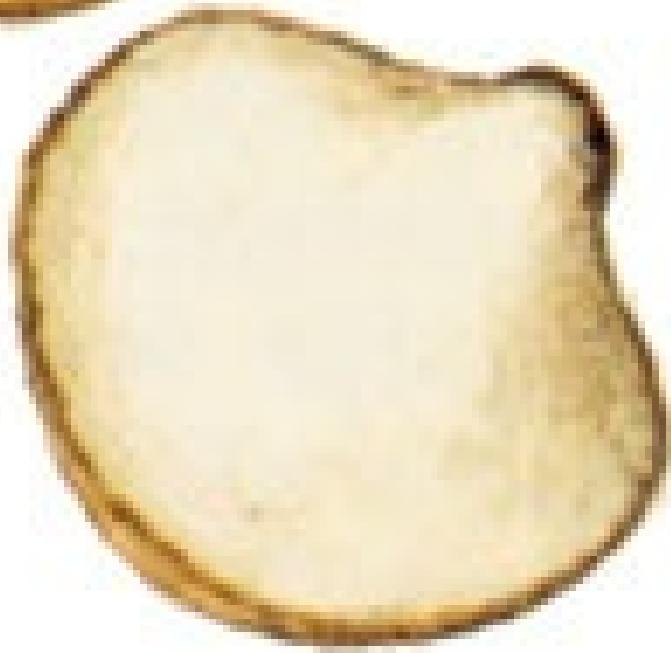
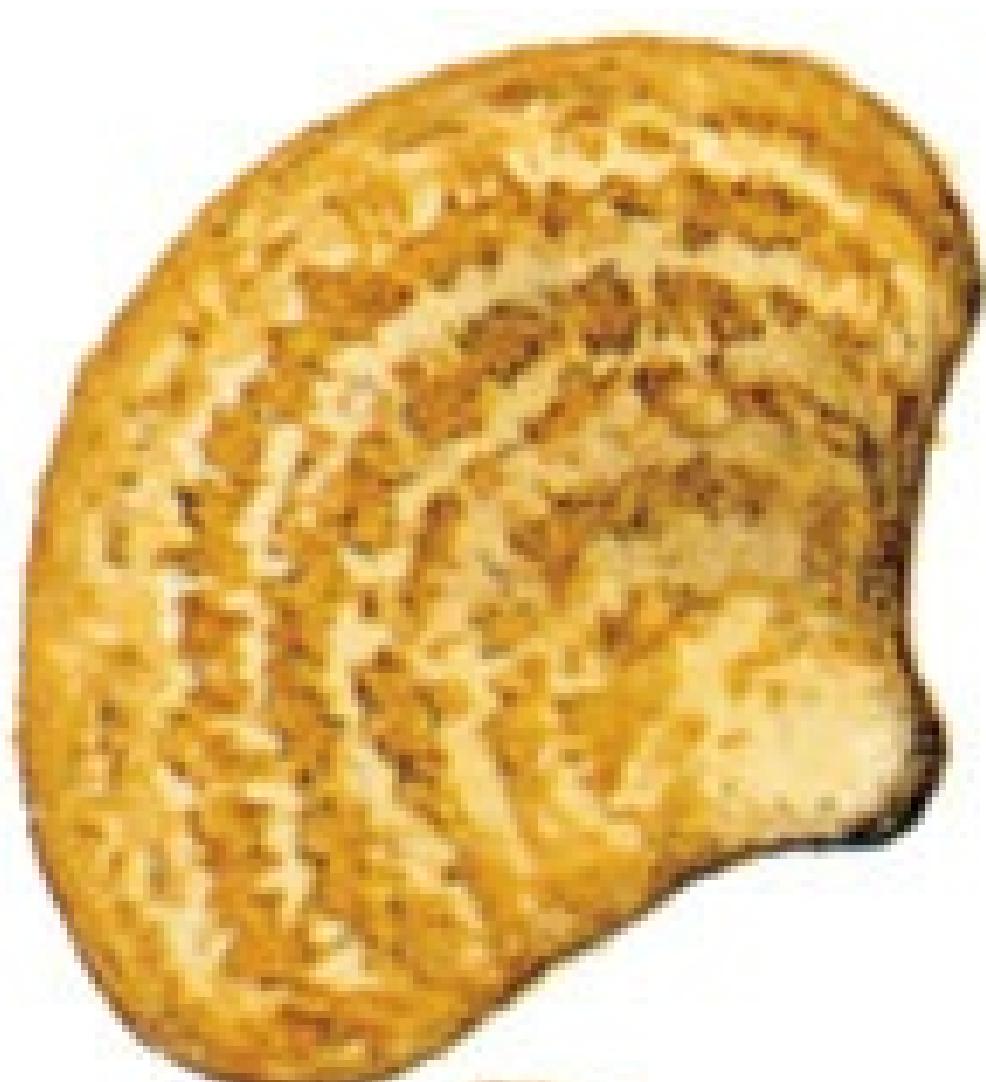
**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Phellinus igniarius* has a black, cracked 'hoof' and rusty-brown flesh. On willow; not common.

## Dryad's Saddle

*Polyporus squamosus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The large cap is semicircular or saddle-shaped (in Greek mythology dryads were wood nymphs), occasionally circular. It is flat-topped or depressed near the lateral or off-centred stem. The upper side is tan-yellow with concentric bands of dark brown, flat scales. The underside has large, angular creamy-yellow pores. The tubes run on to the thick stem which has a brown-black, velvety base.

**SIZE** Cap to 50 cm x 5 cm thick, stem 3-10 cm x 1-6 cm.

**HABITAT** Overlapping clusters on broad-leaved trees including elm, beech and sycamore.

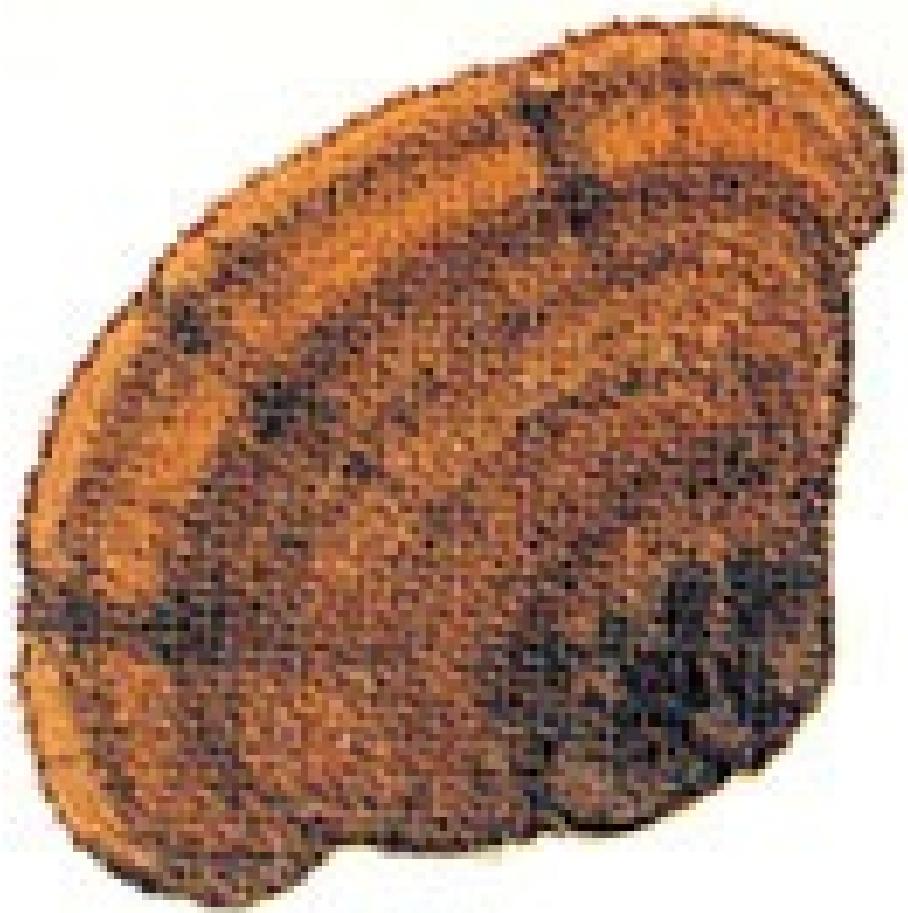
**SEASON** Spring to summer. Not persisting.

**EDIBLE** Edges of young caps are the most tender.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P. tuberaster* is small and funnel-shaped.

## Shaggy Polypore

*Inonotus hispidus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The thick, broad-edged, semicircular brackets have a red-brown (later black), coarsely hairy upper side. The margin remains a brighter yellow-brown colour. The underside is pale yellow, maturing brown with small pores which often exude clear, dew-like drops. The cap is soft and moist when young; it dries tougher.

**SIZE** 10-25 cm across, 8-20 cm broad, 4-10 cm thick.

**HABITAT** Solitary or in small groups on trunks of broad-leaved trees; most frequently on ash.

**SEASON** Summer but persisting through the year.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and often insect-ridden.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *I. dryadeus* grows near the base of oak and the non-shaggy bracket exudes orange-red droplets.

## Common Ganoderma

*Ganoderma adspersum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The very woody, perennial brackets consist of several layers of tubes; the lower layers are broader than the upper, above which is thick, dark brown flesh. The upper side is crust-like, with dark brown bumps and concentric ridges. The edge is rounded. The tiny creamy-grey pores on the underside bruise brown.

**SIZE** 10-30 cm across, 10-25 cm broad, 4-8 cm thick.

**HABITAT** Near the base of living trunks and dead stumps; mostly on broad-leaved trees, e.g. beech and lime.

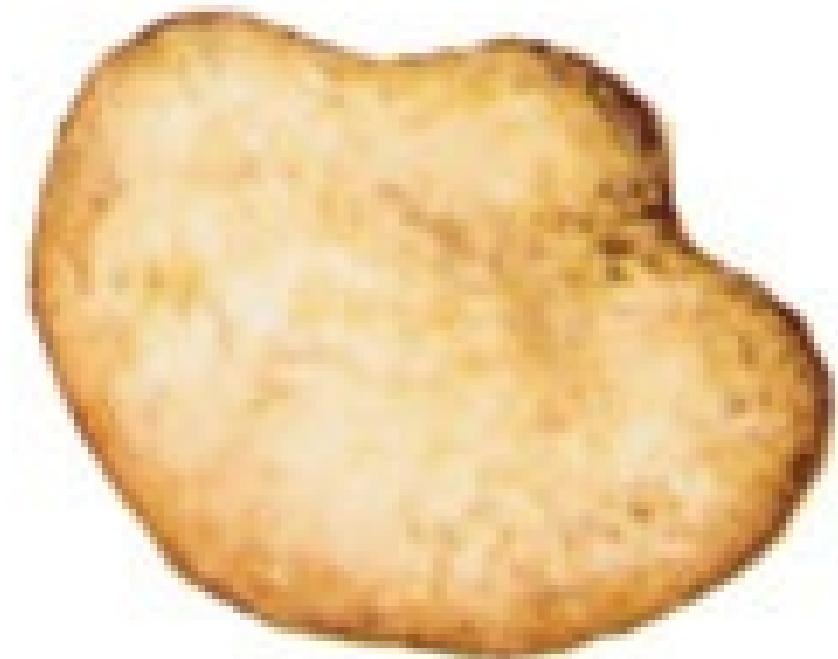
**SEASON** All year as the brackets are perennial.

**INEDIBLE** As hard as wood.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Much confused with *G. applanatum* which is more sharp-edged and has thin, white-flecked, brown flesh.

## Beefsteak Fungus

*Fistulina hepatica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

More like an ox tongue in shape, colour and texture, this strange fungus is soft and moist when young, with a rough pinky-red upper side and a broad margin. Older ones are firmer, smooth and liver-brown with a sharper edge. The straw-yellow pores bruise and age red-brown, often exuding a blood-red juice. The watery tubes are readily separated from the thick flesh which has the appearance of raw steak.

**SIZE 8-20 cm across, 3-6 cm thick.**

**HABITAT** Usually low on the trunk of old living oak and sweet chestnut trees; also on their stumps.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn; not persisting.

**EDIBLE** Best simmered; it can be bitter.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None.

## Sulphur Polypore

*Laetiporus sulphureus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

When young the fan-shaped brackets are soft and moist, with a broad margin. Old brackets become sharp-edged with a dry, chalky texture. Initially the upperside is bright orange or sulphur-yellow and has a suede-like feel but this fades to creamy-yellow with a smooth dry surface. The tiny round pores on the underside are pale yellow. It is thick-fleshed with a pleasant taste. Also known as Chicken of the Woods.

**SIZE** Individual caps 5-20 cm across, 2-6 cm thick.

**HABITAT** Tiered on oak, sweet chestnut, yew and beech.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn. Occasionally persisting.

**EDIBLE** Texture of chicken but can cause nausea.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Pale specimens of Giant Polypore look similar but the pores bruise black.

## Giant Polypore

*Meripilus giganteus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Produces clusters of overlapping brackets up to a metre across. Each fan-shaped lobe arises from a common bulbous base. Tan-brown, radially wrinkled and faintly zoned with fine, darker brown fibres. The undulating thin margin often divides into smaller sub-brackets. The small-pored cream underside blackens on handling as does the flesh.

**SIZE** Lobes 10-35 cm across, 1-3 cm thick.

**HABITAT** On stumps, roots or near the base of living broad-leaved trees; mostly on beech.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn. Soon rotting.

**EDIBLE** Slow-cooked young brackets are edible but can cause gastric upset in some people.

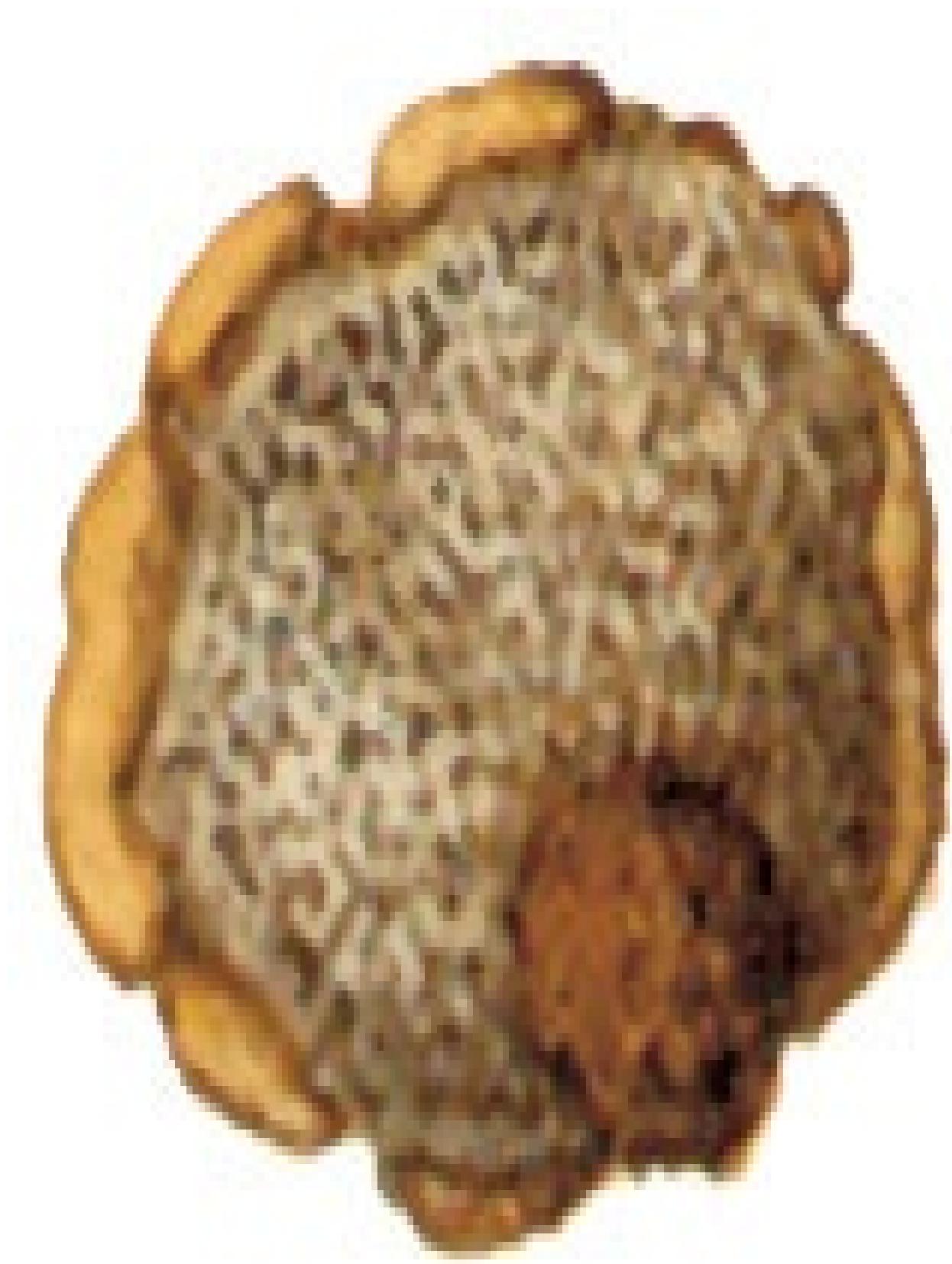
**SIMILAR SPECIES** Can be confused with Sulphur Polypore, Dryad's Saddle and Hen of the Woods.

## Hen of the Woods

*Grifola frondosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Typically found at the base of oak, it forms a cauliflower-like rosette of small, soft, horizontal, grey-brown, leafy brackets which branch from a central white stem. Each thin, undulating, fan-shaped segment is radially furrowed. The small round pores on the underside continue to the top of the stem. The sweet smell becomes less pleasant as it ages.

**SIZE** Whole fruitbody up to 40 cm in diameter.

**HABITAT** On stumps, roots and at the base of living broad-leaved trees; mostly with oak.

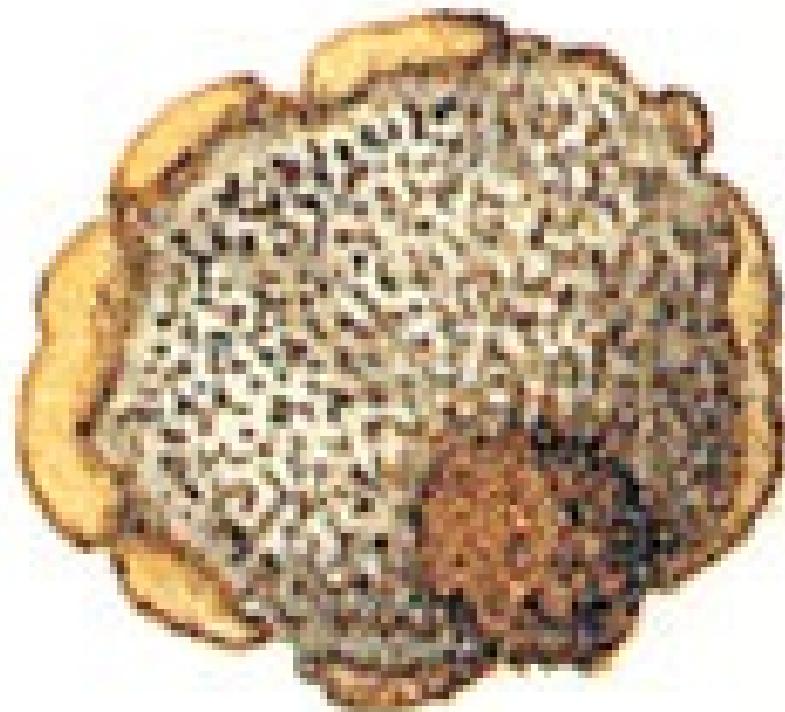
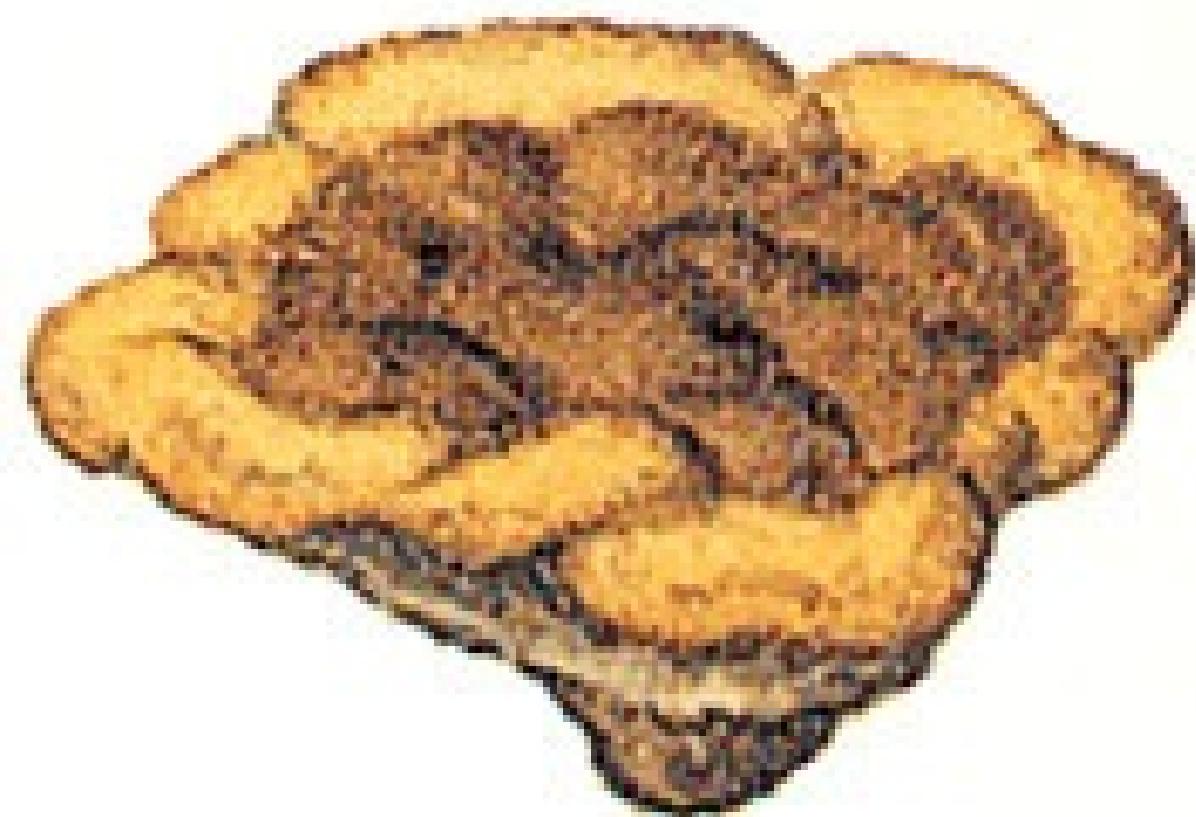
**SEASON** Autumn. Not persisting.

**EDIBLE** Slow cooking softens the tough texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Has been confused with Giant Polypore and Cauliflower Fungus - the latter grows at the base of conifers.

## Fuzzy Polypore

*Phaeolus schweinitzii*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The mature fruitbody is shaped like a broad inverted cone. The flat top is initially rusty-orange, convex and concentrically grooved. It is soft and spongy when young, with a fuzzy, mat-like surface. It ages dry, dark red-brown to black with a paler edge. The olive-yellow pores (left of picture) become maze-like and turn brown with age and handling. The tubes run onto the stocky brown stem.

**SIZE** Cap 8-30 cm diameter, stem 3-8 cm x 2-6 cm.

**HABITAT** On stumps or from the roots of conifers, including pine, spruce and larch. Solitary.

**SEASON** Autumn. Dried specimens persist into winter.

**INEDIBLE** Often encrusts old pine needles.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None.

## **Brown Goblet**

*Coltricia perennis*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Growing on the ground, this species is easy to mistake for a toadstool but it has a thin, tough, corky cap with tubes on its underside. The circular cap is flat or funnel-shaped and velvety, with concentric yellow-brown, rust and grey-brown bands which give it the appearance of tree rings. The pale thin undulating edge often splits. The pores are rusty-brown, angular and decurrent on to the narrow, frequently flattened, velvety brown stem.

**SIZE** Cap 3-7 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 3-8 mm.

**HABITAT** On well-drained or burnt ground; often under pine.

**SEASON** Late summer but old fruitbodies persist.

**INEDIBLE** However, it is used in floral decorations.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Winter Polypore (*Polyporus brumalis*) lacks the concentric zones and grows on dead wood.

## **JELLY FUNGI**

## Jew's Ear

*Auricularia auricula-judae*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Judas is said to have hanged himself on an elder; the main habitat of this very common fungus sometimes placed in the genus *Hirneola*. Initially cup-shaped and smooth, the fruitbody elongates to the shape of a wrinkled human ear. When moist it is soft, gelatinous and date-brown but it dries smaller, darker and hard. The upper (outer) surface is slightly velvety. It is attached laterally by a small stalk.

**SIZE** 2-7 cm across and 2-5 cm broad.

**HABITAT** Mostly on living or dead wood of elder. Also on other trees e.g. beech and sycamore.

**SEASON** Throughout the year, softening after rain.

**EDIBLE** Best in soups or stews; not easily fried.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *A. mesenterica* (Tripe Fungus) is like a small hairy bracket above but is gelatinous below.

## Yellow Brain Fungus

*Tremella mesenterica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This curious fungus is easy to spot after wet weather with its bright yellow-orange colour and very soft, shiny, irregularly folded, gelatinous fruitbody. Originally disc-like it soon becomes more brain-shaped. Attached to pieces of dead wood by a relatively small basal area; when knocked it wobbles like jelly. In dry weather it shrinks, darkens, becomes very hard and is more difficult to find.

**SIZE 2-8 cm across.**

**HABITAT** On dead twigs and branches of broad-leaved trees, especially hazel, birch and ash. Also on gorse.

**SEASON** All year but more frequent in winter.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial, with an odd texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *T. foliacea* is date-brown and has leaf-like, undulating lobes.

## **Witch's Butter**

*Exidia glandulosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

When growing on fallen branches the gelatinous black fruitbody is disc- or top-shaped and attached by a short stalk; on erect branches it is more bracket-like and stalkless. It becomes lobed and brain-like when mature. The upper side is roughened with tiny warts, the sides and lower surface are slightly downy. It shrinks to a hard black crust when dry. Also known as *Exidia truncata*.

**SIZE** 1-5 cm across.

**HABITAT** Grouped on dead wood, including stumps of broad-leaved trees; most frequent on oak.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** It has an odd, slippery texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The firmer Black Bulgar leaves a black mark when rubbed with a finger.

## Orange Jelly

*Dacrymyces stillatus*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Each rounded, soft fruitbody is only a few mm across but this species grows in large groups and is easily seen. Neighbouring fruitbodies often merge. It occurs as both an orange and a paler yellow form. When old it dries harder and darker.

**SIZE** 2-5 mm across.

**HABITAT** On dead wood of both broad-leaved and coniferous trees.  
Especially common on wooden gates and fence-posts.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Orange Jelly can be confused with Coral Spot which also produces many tiny rounded fruitbodies on dead wood. These are dry, warty and pink or dark-red; not orange.

## Yellow Fingers

*Calocera cornea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Gelatinous in texture, the tiny pale yellow, smooth, cylindrical fruitbodies have rounded or pointed ends. Most are simple and finger-like but some branch near the apex. Shiny when moist, they are erect and usually gregarious; growing in lines or as groups of 4 or 5 together in a hand-like cluster.

**SIZE** 2-10 mm high x 1-2 mm wide.

**HABITAT** On dead wood of trunks and branches of broad-leaved trees, especially where the bark has been lost. Commonest on beech and oak.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial and surprisingly tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *C. furcata* is externally very similar but it grows on dead conifers. See Yellow Clubs.

## Yellow Clubs

*Calocera pallidospathulata*



Alan Outen

This species is rarely mentioned in older books on fungal identification because it is a relative new-comer to Great Britain; the first record, near Pickering, was in 1969. It is now very common, however, especially in conifer plantations where it frequently takes the place of Yellow Fingers from which it differs in having a larger, stalked, more flattened, club-shaped fruitbody.

**SIZE** 5-15 mm high x 2-4 mm wide.

**HABITAT** Gregarious on dead conifer wood, especially on spruce.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Slimy texture.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The thinner, smaller Yellow Fingers grows on dead wood of broad-leaved trees.

## Jelly Antler Fungus

*Calocera viscosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This beautiful, bright golden-yellow to orange fungus has a gelatinous, tough texture and is smooth and shiny when moist. Firmly rooted in the dead wood from which it grows, the base is paler, flattened and frequently fused with neighbouring fruitbodies. The forked cylindrical branches end in pointed tips which are sometimes further branched, as in antlers.

**SIZE** 3-8 cm high, 2-3 cm wide.

**HABITAT** On stumps and dead roots of conifers, most frequent on pine.

**SEASON** Autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and tasteless.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Other *Calocera* species are smaller and less branched. Coral Fungi (Crested Coral Fungus & Grey Coral Fungus) are dry and brittle.

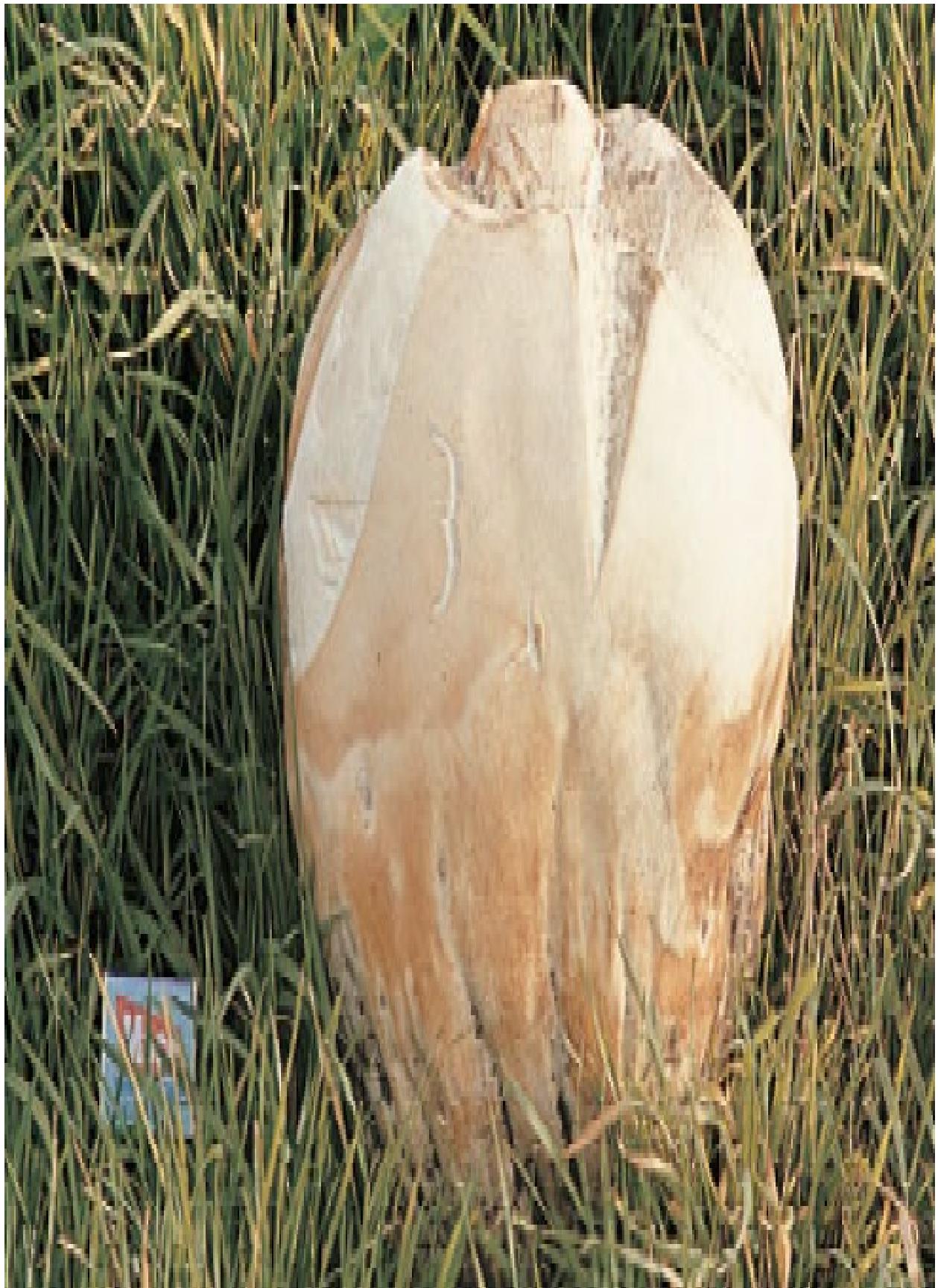
## **PUFFBALL FAMILY**

## Giant Puffball

*Langermannia gigantea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is one of our largest fungi, similar in size and shape to a football. The solid young fruitbodies have a thin, white, smooth, dry skin which later turns olive and finally brown when it splits open. The mushroom-smelling flesh is white and firm but turns olive-yellow and later brown and powdery as the spores develop.

**SIZE** 20-75 cm diameter when mature.

**HABITAT** Occasional in pasture, woods and gardens; often with nettles on rubbish tips. In groups; forms rings.

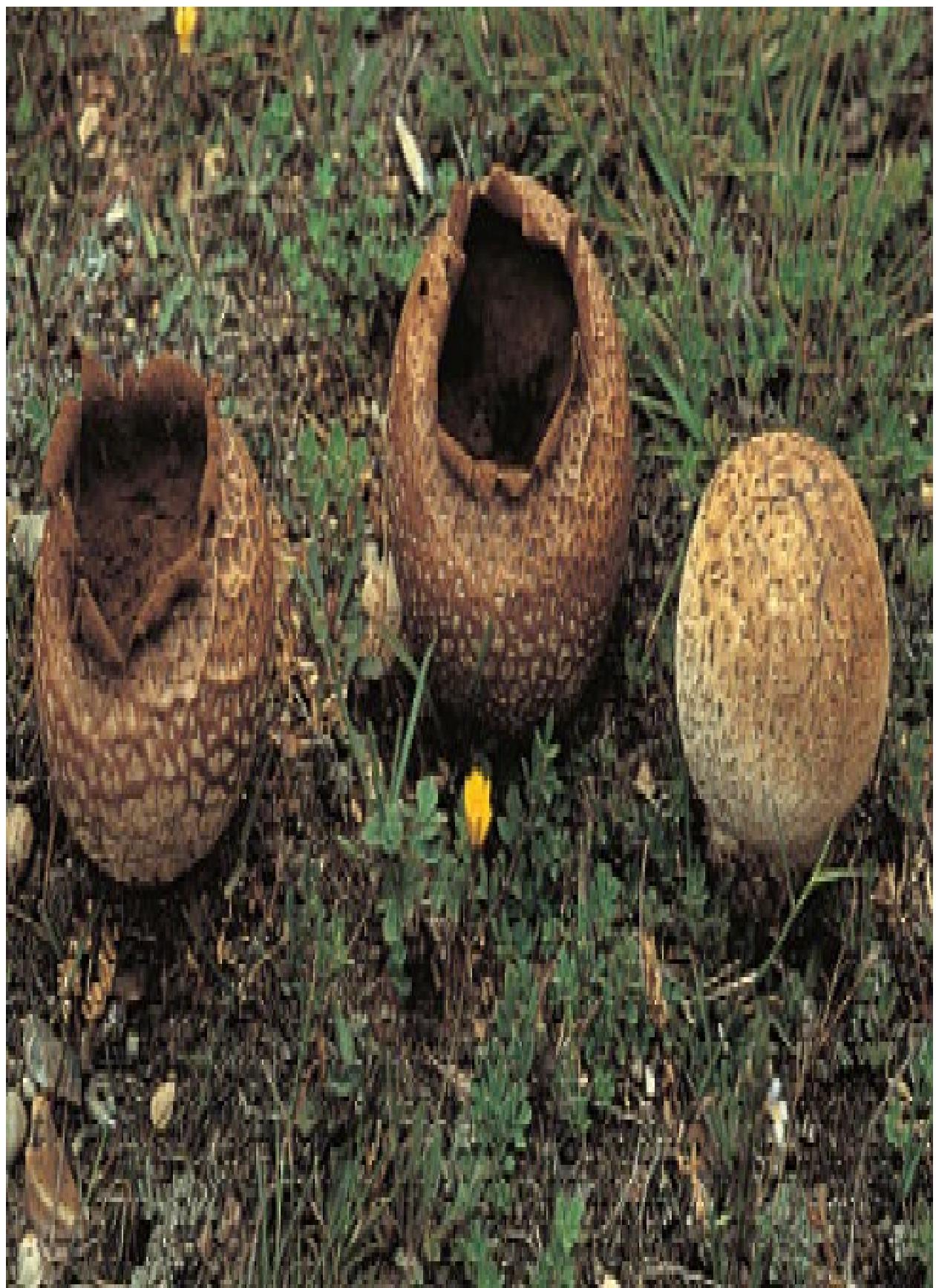
**SEASON** Early summer to autumn. Old ones persist.

**EDIBLE** When still white inside it is excellent; best baked or fried with lemon juice to add flavour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Mosaic Puffball.

## Mosaic Puffball

*Calvatia utriformis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This puffball is the size of a large tennis ball; with a flattened top and a two-layered skin. The rough white outer skin cracks into pyramid-shaped warts but these soon disappear to reveal a white inner skin patterned with a honeycomb-like mosaic. Later smooth and brown, when a hole appears and the edges spread back to release the brown spores. The leathery non-fertile base persists like a thick saucer.

**SIZE** 5-15 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** In small groups on unimproved upland pasture. More frequent in the north.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn. Brown basal region persists.

**EDIBLE** The inner flesh must be still white.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Small specimens of Giant Puffball have a single smooth skin and no infertile base.

## Pestle Puffball

*Calvatia excipuliformis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This has a long thick stalk region below the spherical apex giving it a pestle or drum-stick shape. The white flesh is protected by a creamy-brown skin covered with tiny spines and granules. These are soon lost revealing the brown, parchment-like inner skin which splits at the apex and peels open, releasing brown spores. The non-fertile, wrinkled stalk region persists after the spores have been shed.

**SIZE 8-15 cm high, apex 5-10 cm, stalk 3-5 cm across.**

**HABITAT** In parkland, open broad-leaved woodland and on heaths.  
Occasional; solitary or in small groups.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Young specimens are edible.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Common Puffball.

## Common Puffball

*Lycoperdon perlatum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The globular head region is often flattened but narrows abruptly to a stem region which is about half the total height. Initially the skin is covered in conical warts (especially on the head region) but these fall off leaving a mesh-like pattern on a brown paper-like skin. This ruptures to form a small apical pore through which the spores escape. Young specimens are firm and white inside.

**SIZE** 2-5 cm diameter, 3-8 cm tall.

**HABITAT** Among leaf litter of both broad-leaved and coniferous woods.  
Usually gregarious.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Only edible when firm and young.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Stump Puffball grows on wood.

## Stinking Puffball

*Lycoperdon foetidum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Shaped like a rounded spinning top, it differs when young from Common Puffball in being covered with pale brown, short spines; groups of which converge like wigwam poles. These later fall off leaving a mesh-like pattern on a brown back-ground. Initially firm and white inside it becomes olive-brown as the spores mature and are released through a small apical pore. It has an unpleasant odour when young.

**SIZE** 2-5 cm diameter, 2-4 cm high.

**HABITAT** Frequent in acid woodlands and heaths.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Unpleasant smell is offputting.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Spiny Puffball has longer spines and a darker spore mass. See Common Puffball.

## Spiny Puffball

*Lycoperdon echinatum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Stinking Puffball is often wrongly recorded as Spiny Puffball which is pear-shaped with a globular apex and short conical stalk. Even young specimens are dark and densely covered with long brown spines, groups of which curve and fuse at the top to form little pyramids (3-4 mm high). These later fall off leaving a net-like pattern on the dark brown skin. At maturity the spore mass becomes dark brown. A small round pore opens at the apex.

**SIZE** 2-6 cm diameter, 3-7 cm high.

**HABITAT** In broad-leaved woods (e.g. beech) on chalk.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Not worth eating.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Stinking Puffball.

## Stump Puffball

*Lycoperdon pyriforme*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The only puffball which grows in large clusters on rotting wood (This includes dead roots, when it appears to grow on soil). Pear-shaped, and often attached by white strands, it starts granular and creamy-white but matures smooth and ochre-brown when a small hole opens at the apex. When young the inside is firm and white; the upper area turns olive-brown as the spores mature.

**SIZE** 1-4 cm diameter, 1-6 cm high.

**HABITAT** Clustered on rotting wood of both broad-leaved and coniferous trees. Very common.

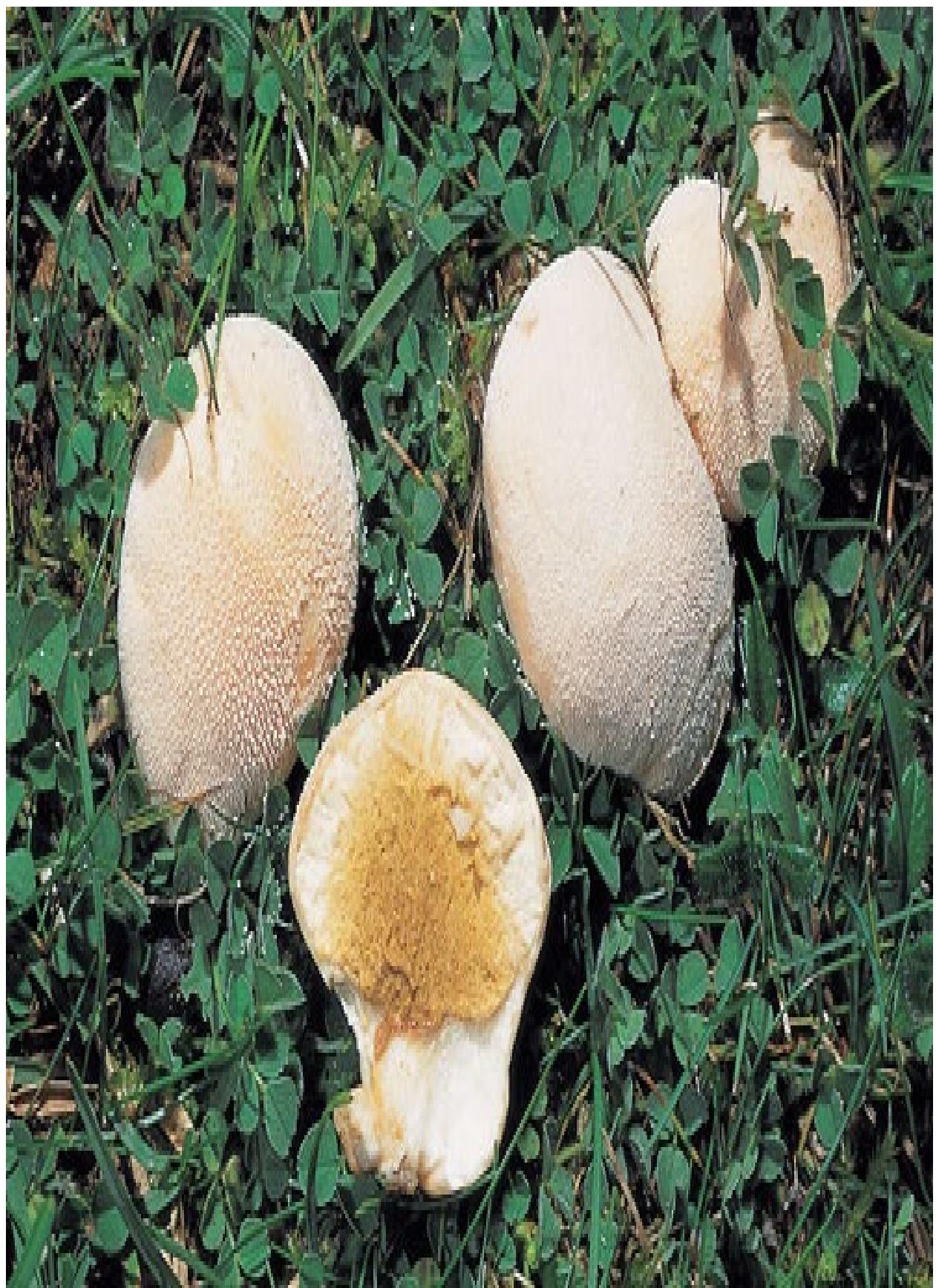
**SEASON** Summer to late autumn. Old ones persist.

**EDIBLE** Can be eaten young but has an unpleasant odour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None. Our other puffballs grow on soil.

## Membranous Puffball

*Vascellum pratense*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

One of the commonest puffballs in short grass, it is broadly pear-shaped and flattened at the apex. It is often wider than it is tall and the base is barely narrower. When young the white skin is granular but the granules wash off in the rain leaving a smooth, pale brown surface. Inside, the olive-brown spore mass is clearly separated from the white lower non-fertile region by a membrane. The spores escape through a large apical hole.

**SIZE** 2-5 cm diameter, 2-4 cm high.

**HABITAT** Gregarious in lawns, heaths and near the sea.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn. Lower region persists.

**EDIBLE** Only edible when the flesh is white.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The distinct membrane between the fertile and non-fertile region prevents confusion.

## Rolling Puffball

*Bovista plumbea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The size and shape of a small golf ball, the smooth white outer skin splits and falls away revealing a thin, lead-grey (hence plumbea), parchment-like inner skin. This matures dark brown and peels open revealing the red-brown spore mass which fills the entire fruitbody. When young the inside is firm and white. The fruitbody is attached to the ground at a very small point of contact. Older ones become detached and roll around.

**SIZE** 2-4 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** Short grass including golf courses.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Young ones provide a mouthful each.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The larger *B. nigrescens* matures a shiny purple-black.  
More common in the North.

**EARTHBALL FAMILY**

## Common Earthball

*Scleroderma citrinum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Spherical or slightly flattened, Common Earthball may become slightly lobed. The tiny stalk-like region is often buried in the soil. The yellow-brown, thick (to 5 mm), scaly skin has a reptilian appearance and finally ruptures to release the spores. Initially white, the inside is soon purple-black with white streaks and finally develops into a powdery brown spore mass. It has a rubbery smell.

**SIZE** 3-10 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** On the ground near trees, especially birch and oak; prefers acid soils. Even grows in pavements.

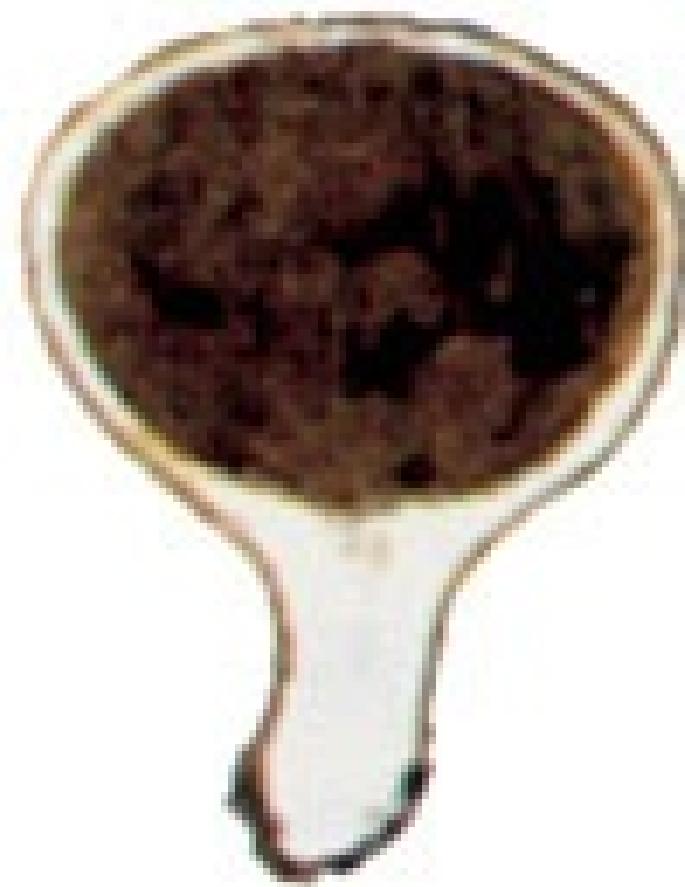
**SEASON** Summer to autumn. Old ones persist a few months.

**POISONOUS** Causes gastric upset especially if undercooked.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Smooth Earthball.

## **Smooth Earthball**

***Scleroderma verrucosum***



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

This has a more pear-shaped fruitbody which has a distinct grooved, stalk-like base attached to white threads. The tough, leathery skin is thinner (2-3 mm) than that of Common Earthball and has much finer, brown scales (these are lost in old specimens). The skin ruptures near the apex to produce an irregularly-shaped opening. Initially white then dark brown and marbled, the inside finally develops into a brown spore mass. The smell is indistinct.

**SIZE** 3-5 cm diameter, 6-7 cm high.

**HABITAT** On acid soils in woods and on heathland.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Not deadly but can cause diarrhoea.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Common Earthball. Puffballs (Giant Puffball-Rolling Puffball) have thinner, softer skins.

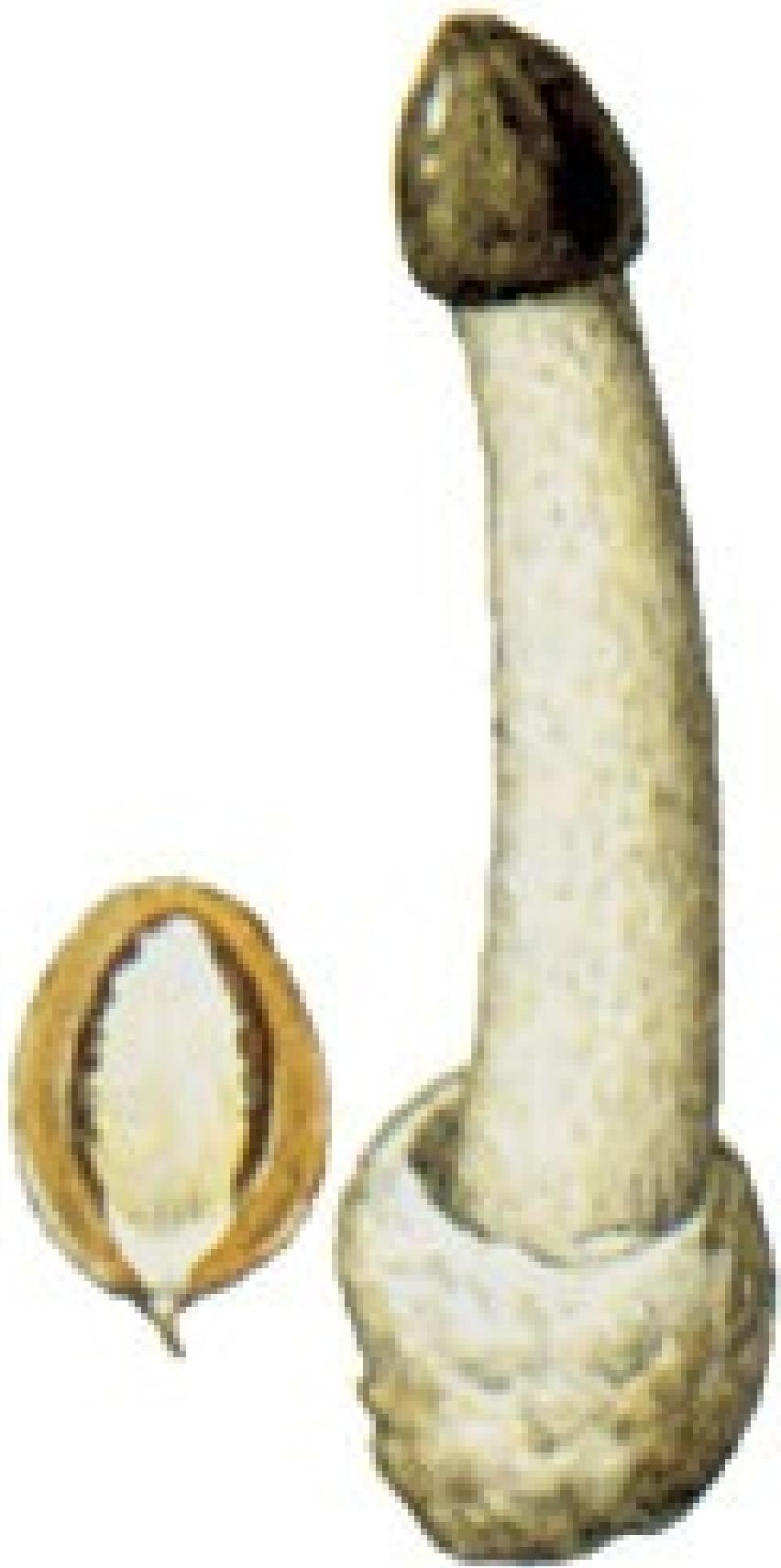
## **STINKHORN FAMILY**

## Stinkhorn

*Phallus impudicus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as Witch's Egg, this fungus feels soft due to a jelly-like layer just beneath the skin. This later splits at the apex and a thick, white hollow stem emerges with the texture of polystyrene and bearing a wrinkled, conical, slimy olive-green head topped by a small white ring. At this stage the fungus smells like bad drains and attracts flies which eat the spore-bearing slime leaving a white honeycomb top.

**SIZE 'Egg' 3-5 cm diameter. Mature 10-20 cm x 2-3 cm.**

**HABITAT** Among leaf litter in woodlands, also in gardens.

**SEASON** Early summer to late autumn.

**EDIBLE** The egg stage (before it smells) can be eaten.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *P.hadriani* has a pink egg. The egg stage is extremely like a puffball.

## Dog Stinkhorn

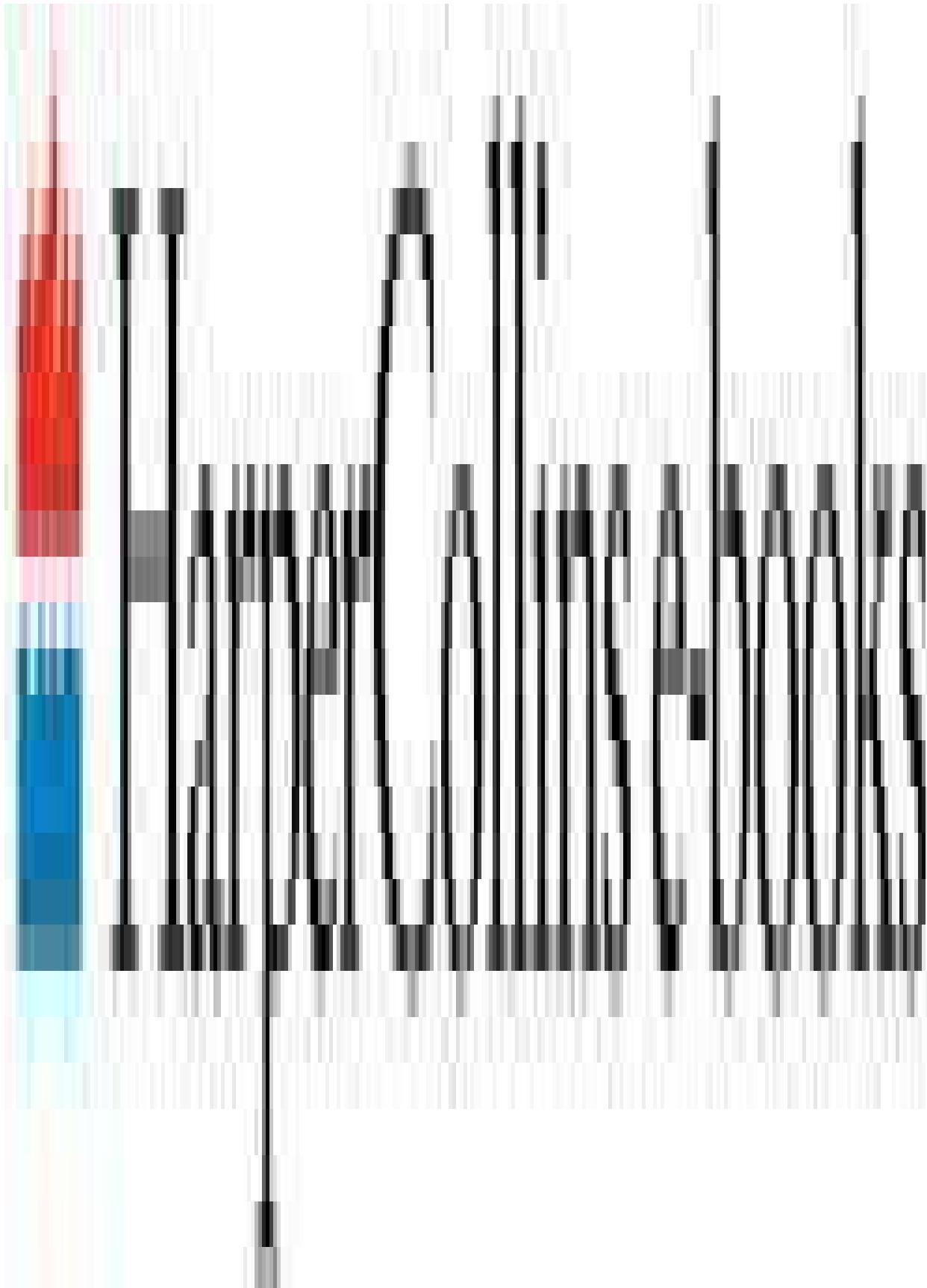
*Mutinus caninus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Less common than Stinkhorn but still frequent, the Dog Stinkhorn is much smaller and the more elongated white egg stage is tinged pale brown. The slim, brittle polystyrene-like stem is white in the lower regions but dark orange near the apex which bears the pointed, dark olive, slimy spore mass. A mildly unpleasant smell attracts flies which eat the spore layer leaving a dark orange honeycomb at the tip.

**SIZE** ‘Egg’ 2-3 cm diameter, Mature 4-8 cm x 1 cm.

**HABITAT** In woodland leaf litter and around rotting wood.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

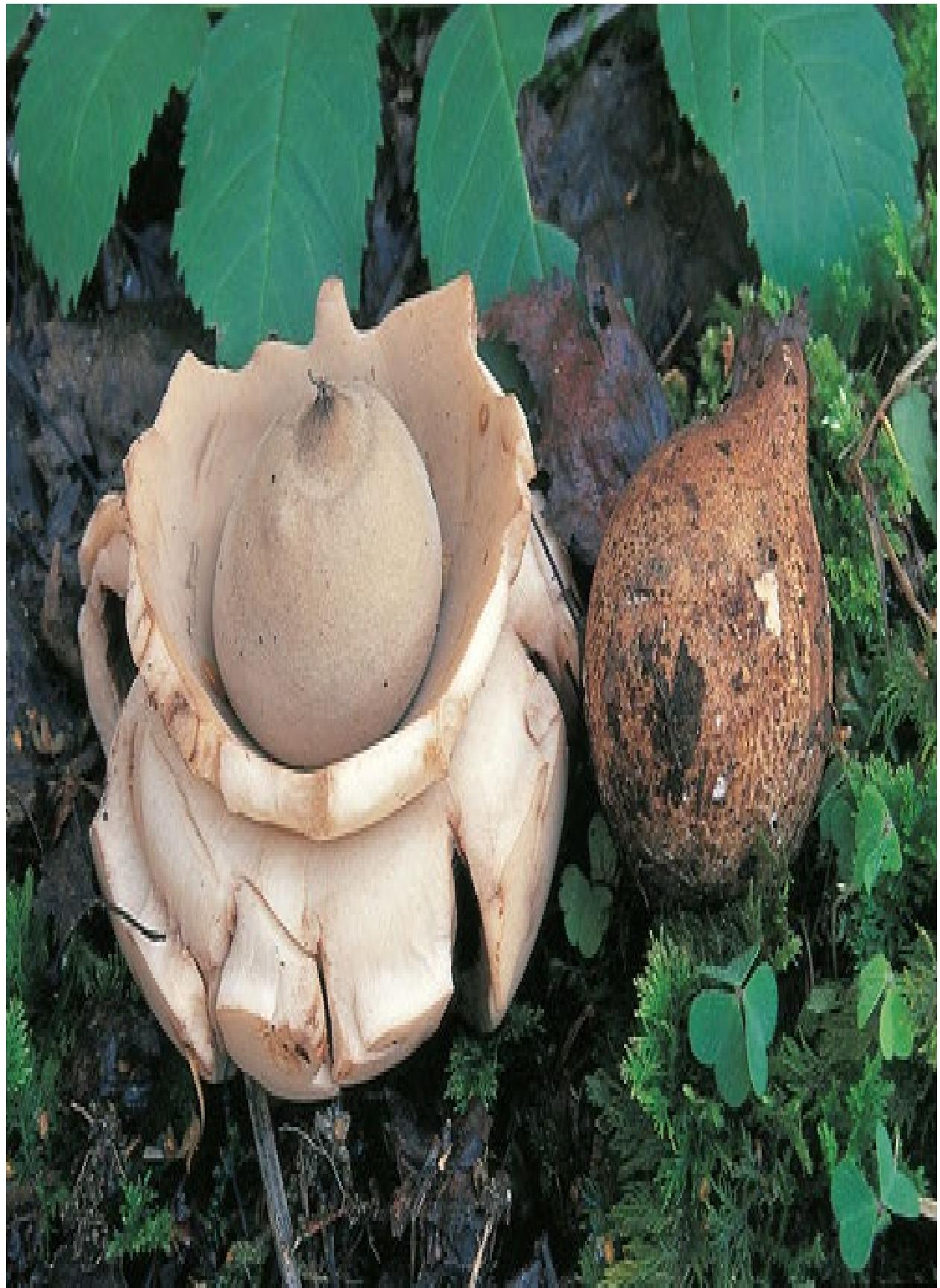
**INEDIBLE** The egg is too small to be worthwhile.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The small size and orange tip distinguishes it from Stinkhorn.

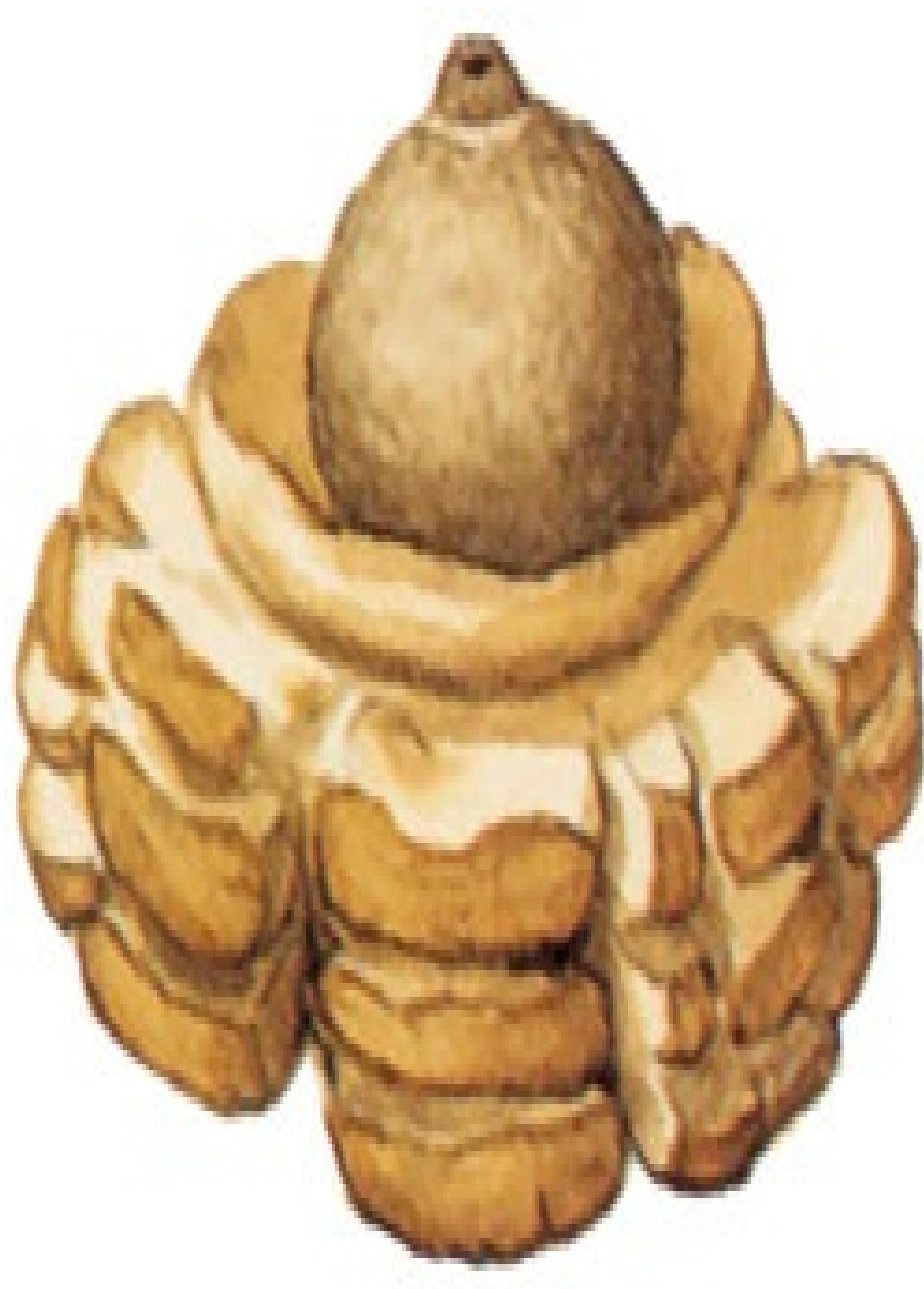
**EARTHSTAR FAMILY**

## Collared Earthstar

*Geastrum triplex*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Earthstars are like puffballs with an outer skin which splits and peels back. None are common but this one is locally frequent. Initially like a pointed puffball, the thick (to 5 mm), fleshy outer skin splits into 5 or 6 creamy-brown lobes which open flat in a star-like pattern. The base of each lobe splits to form a raised circular collar. This surrounds the thin-skinned inner bag which has a small fringed apical opening through which the spores escape.

**SIZE 4-7 cm diameter (when fully open).**

**HABITAT In leaf litter under beech on chalk soils.**

**SEASON Late summer to autumn.**

**INEDIBLE Tough and full of spores.**

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The flesh-coloured *G. rufescens* lacks a collar. *G. pectinatum* has a stalked inner bag.

## **BIRD'S NEST FAMILY**

## Bird's Nest Fungus

*Cyathus striatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Bird's Nest fungi are very small. This is the commonest with a deeply cup-shaped fruitbody, the opening of which is initially covered by a white skin that ruptures to reveal a group of tiny, grey, egg-shaped sacs (peridioles) containing the spores. Each is attached by a thin thread. The inner surface of the 'nest' is grooved and grey. The outer surface is red-brown and bristly.

**SIZE** 1.5 cm tall, 1 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** On dead twigs, needles and bark fragments.

**SEASON** Summer to early autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Tough and tiny.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The rarer *C. olla* has a smooth outer side and a trumpet-shaped top. *Crucibulum laeve* has smooth, straight-edged 'nests'.

## **CUP FUNGI**

## Orange Peel Fungus

*Aleuria aurantia*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

At a casual glance this looks like a piece of orange peel. Initially bowl-like, the thin-fleshed, fragile fruitbody expands to a saucer-shape and may flatten but it has an irregular, undulating margin which is frequently split. The inner, spore-bearing surface is smooth and bright orange; outer surface is minutely downy and paler. There is no stalk.

**SIZE** 2-8 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** Gregarious on damp bare soil, occasionally among herbs in shady places. Commonest on woodland rides, ditch banks and in gardens.

**SEASON** Autumn to early winter.

**EDIBLE** Needs cooking; bland flavour.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The red *Sarcoscypha coccinea* grows on hazel twigs.

## Lemon Peel Fungus

*Otidea onotica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Young fruitbodies start saucer-shaped but one side develops faster causing it to elongate, split and curl inwards. This gives rise to an alternative name - Hare's Ear, which confusingly is also used for the related *O. leporina* (see below). The ochre-yellow outer surface is smooth. The short white stalk region is usually buried in soil.

**SIZE** 2-5 cm across, 4-10 cm high.

**HABITAT** Gregarious among leaf litter or moss under beech or oak.  
Occasional.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Insubstantial and not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *O. leporina* is darker brown and lacks pink tints.  
*Species of Flavoscypha* are brighter yellow.

## Pig's Ears

*Peziza badia*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The genus *Peziza* contains many medium-sized, thin and fragile species with a cup or saucer-shaped fruitbody and little or no stalk. *P. badia* is one of the largest and the undulating, irregular fruitbody lacks a stalk. The smooth, inner spore-bearing surface is dark olive-brown; outer is slightly scurfy near the margin and deep red-brown.

**SIZE** 3-8 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** Gregarious on moist acid soil, especially on paths and ditch banks.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Especially if eaten raw.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Most other *Peziza* species are a paler colour on one or both surfaces. See Large Cup Fungus & Straw Cup Fungus.

## Large Cup Fungus

*Peziza repanda*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Much paler than the previous species, this has large shallow, saucer-like fruitbodies and an undulating margin which is frequently split, giving a toothed appearance. There is no stalk. The smooth inner spore-bearing surface is a pale chestnut-brown; contrasting with the pale cream of the scurfy outer surface.

**SIZE 3-12 cm diameter.**

**HABITAT** On the ground, often close to rotting stumps and also on sawdust.

**SEASON** Early summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Related species are poisonous.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The fawn-coloured Straw Cup Fungus is most easily separated by its habitat. *P. succosa* is darker brown and exudes a yellow juice when broken.

## Straw Cup Fungus

*Peziza vesiculosa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The young fruitbody is deeply cup-shaped with only a small central opening but this enlarges as the fungus grows. The margins remain inrolled but become split, resulting in a ragged appearance. The inner surface is pale brown, smooth but wrinkled; the outer side is scurfy and pale buff. Neighbouring fruitbodies often fuse to form large clusters.

**SIZE** 3-8 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** Old straw bales, manure, horse dung, cultivated mushroom beds, compost heaps and rich soil.

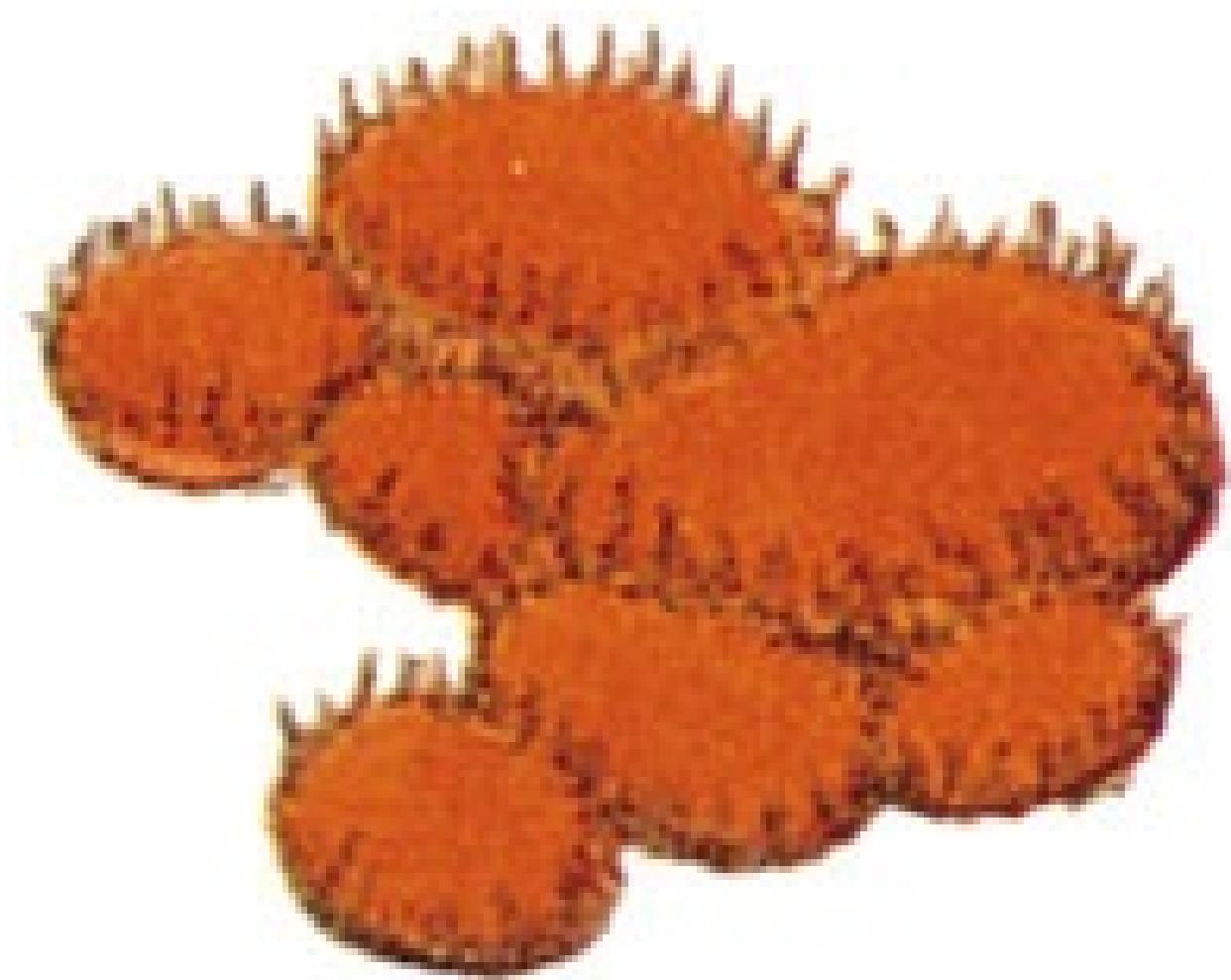
**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**POISONOUS** Edible if well-cooked but not recommended.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller *P. cerea* grows on damp mortar and soil and is common in poorly ventilated cellars.

## Eyelash Fungus

*Scutellinia scutellata*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The flattened, saucer-like fruitbody is much smaller than those of the Peziza genus but the clustered nature and scarlet colour of Eyelash Fungus make it easy to find. Starting knob-like then saucer-shaped, the fruitbody finally flattens but maintains a small upturned margin. The bright scarlet, smooth inner surface contrasts with the brown bristly hairs of the outer side; these project above the margin like eyelashes. There is no stalk.

**SIZE 0.5-1.5 cm diameter.**

**HABITAT** Clustered on damp rotting wood and on damp soil.

**SEASON** Spring to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Several closely related species are only separated by microscopic features.

## **SADDLE-CUP FAMILY**

## White Saddle

*Helvella crispa*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This odd-looking fungus has a saddle-shaped cap with two or three undulating, irregular lobes and margins free of the stalk. The upper spore-bearing surface is creamy-white; the lower surface is pale ochre and slightly downy. The stem is brittle, white and internally chambered with deep longitudinal surface furrows, some of which fork and reunite.

**SIZE** Cap 2-6 cm, stem 4-7 cm x 2-4 cm.

**HABITAT** Under broad-leaved trees and beside woodland paths.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Can cause gastric upset, especially if eaten raw.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Elfin's Saddle has a dark grey, more convoluted cap. Common Morel has a brain-like cap and a smooth stem.

## Elfin's Saddle

*Helvella lacunosa*



Patrick Harding

This is like a dark-coloured version of the preceding species. The cap is more convoluted and the irregular lobes have rounded margins which are attached to the stem, resulting in hollow chambers. The cap is dark grey to black on the outside and a similar colour within the chambers. The grey-brown hollow stalk is deeply furrowed and has numerous cross walls.

**SIZE** Cap 2-4 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 1-2 cm.

**HABITAT** On sandy or burnt ground under both coniferous and broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Can cause gastric upset so best avoided.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** White Saddle is much paler and the cap lobes are free of the stem.

## Turban Fungus

*Gyromitra esculenta*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Also known as False Morel, this is uncommon in Britain but can be mistaken for Morel (Common Morel) and is deadly poisonous. The broad, fist-shaped, deeply lobed, brain-like, red-brown cap is divided internally into a number of hollow chambers. The short creamy-brown stem is externally furrowed and internally hollowed into several chambers. It is fragile in texture.

**SIZE** Cap 5-15 cm, stem 2-5 cm x 2-3 cm.

**HABITAT** In coniferous woods. Less rare in Scotland.

**SEASON** Spring to early summer.

**POISONOUS** Can be fatal and even when consumed after careful preparation is suspected of causing cancer.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** See Common Morel.

**MOREL FAMILY**

## Common Morel

*Morchella esculenta*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

The hollow egg-shaped cap may be globular or more conical and is often not symmetrical. The deeply pitted surface is like honeycomb and the pits vary from pale brown to grey; darker when old. The pale ochre stem is grooved near its base and has a single hollow chamber.

**SIZE** Cap 3-8 cm across, stem 3-8 cm x 1.5-2.5 cm.

**HABITAT** On well-drained soil, usually under broad-leaved trees in woodland edges, hedgerows and gardens.

**SEASON** April to May with a short fruiting season.

**EDIBLE** Wonderful flavour and texture. Dries well.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *M. elata* has a pointed conical cap with the pits in vertical rows. See Turban Fungus.

**JELLY DISCS FAMILY**

## Jelly Babies

*Leotia lubrica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

A distinctive little fungus with a slippery, gelatinous feel, its rounded olive-yellow cap becomes flat and centrally depressed but with inrolled lobed margins and a smooth underside. The pale yellow stem is slightly flattened and flecked with tiny green specks.

**SIZE** Cap 1-1.5 cm across, stem 2-5 cm x 4-7 mm.

**HABITAT** In moist bare ground and among moss under broad-leaved trees, especially beech.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The rare *Spathularia flava* is bright yellow and grows under conifers. *Mitrula paludosa*, which grows in waterlogged leaf litter, has a club-shaped, orange head and a slender white stem

## Green Wood Cup

*Chlorosplenium aeruginascens*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Wood which has been stained blue-green by the action of this fungus is commonly found; the fruitbodies are rarer. Initially goblet-shaped with a short stalk, the top becomes saucer-shaped and later irregularly wavy. The smooth upper surface is bright blue-green; the outer surface and stalk start paler but mature blue-green. It is soft in texture. Also known as *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*.

**SIZE 0.5-1.0 cm diameter.**

**HABITAT** On dead wood of broad-leaved trees e.g. oak.

**SEASON** From spring to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** The stained wood is part of the intricate patterns employed in Tunbridge ware.

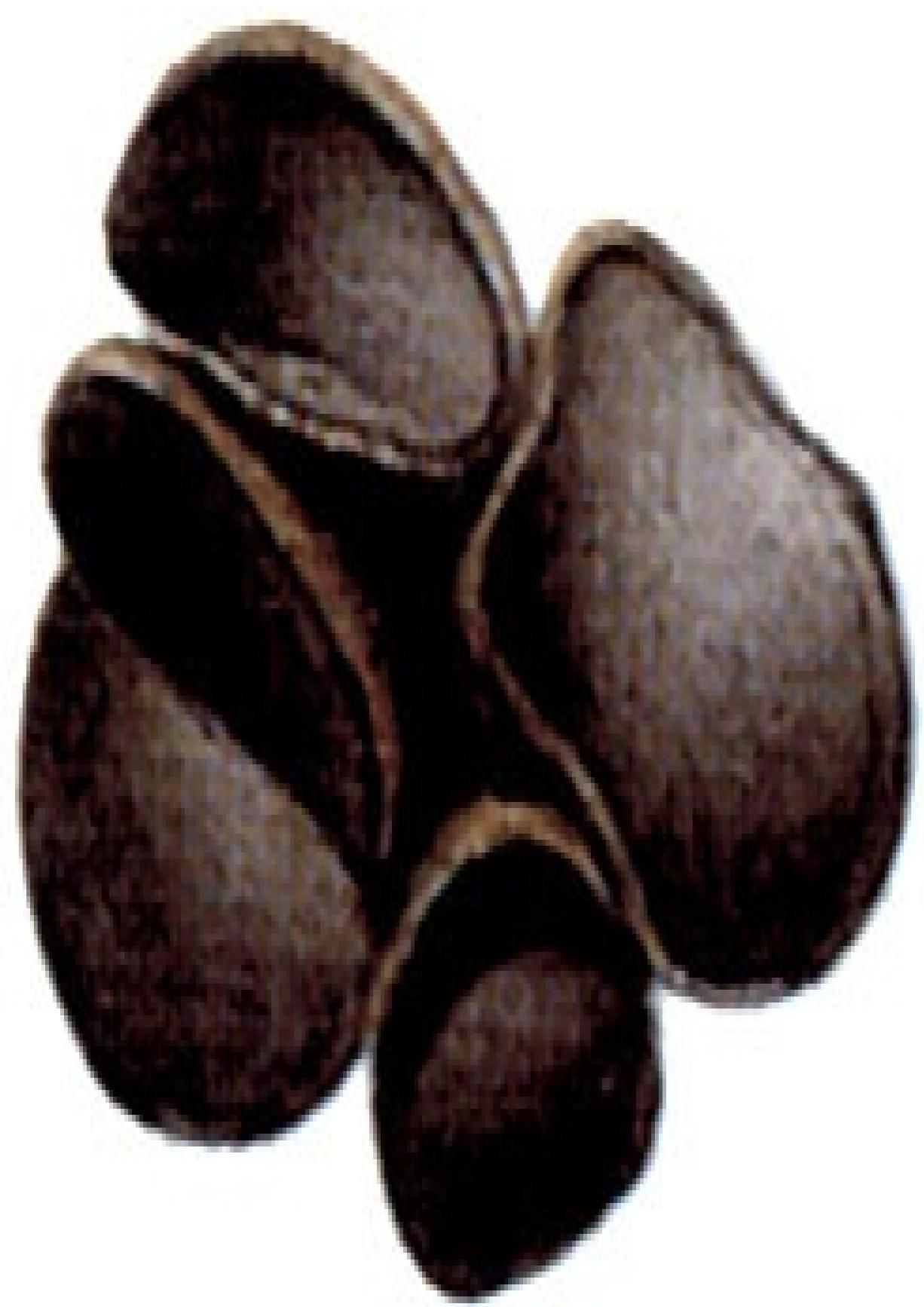
**SIMILAR SPECIES** None.

## **Black Bulgar**

*Bulgaria inquinans*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This species has a firm rubbery consistency. Top-shaped with inrolled margins, it later flattens to become more like a thick button with a concave, shiny black upper surface which leaves a black mark when rubbed with a finger. The outer surface is scurfy and dark brown. In dry conditions the shrunken fruitbody has a leathery feel.

**SIZE** 1-3 cm diameter, 1-1.5 cm high.

**HABITAT** Gregarious, sometimes clustered. Grows from the bark of fallen trunks, mostly of oak and sweet chestnut.

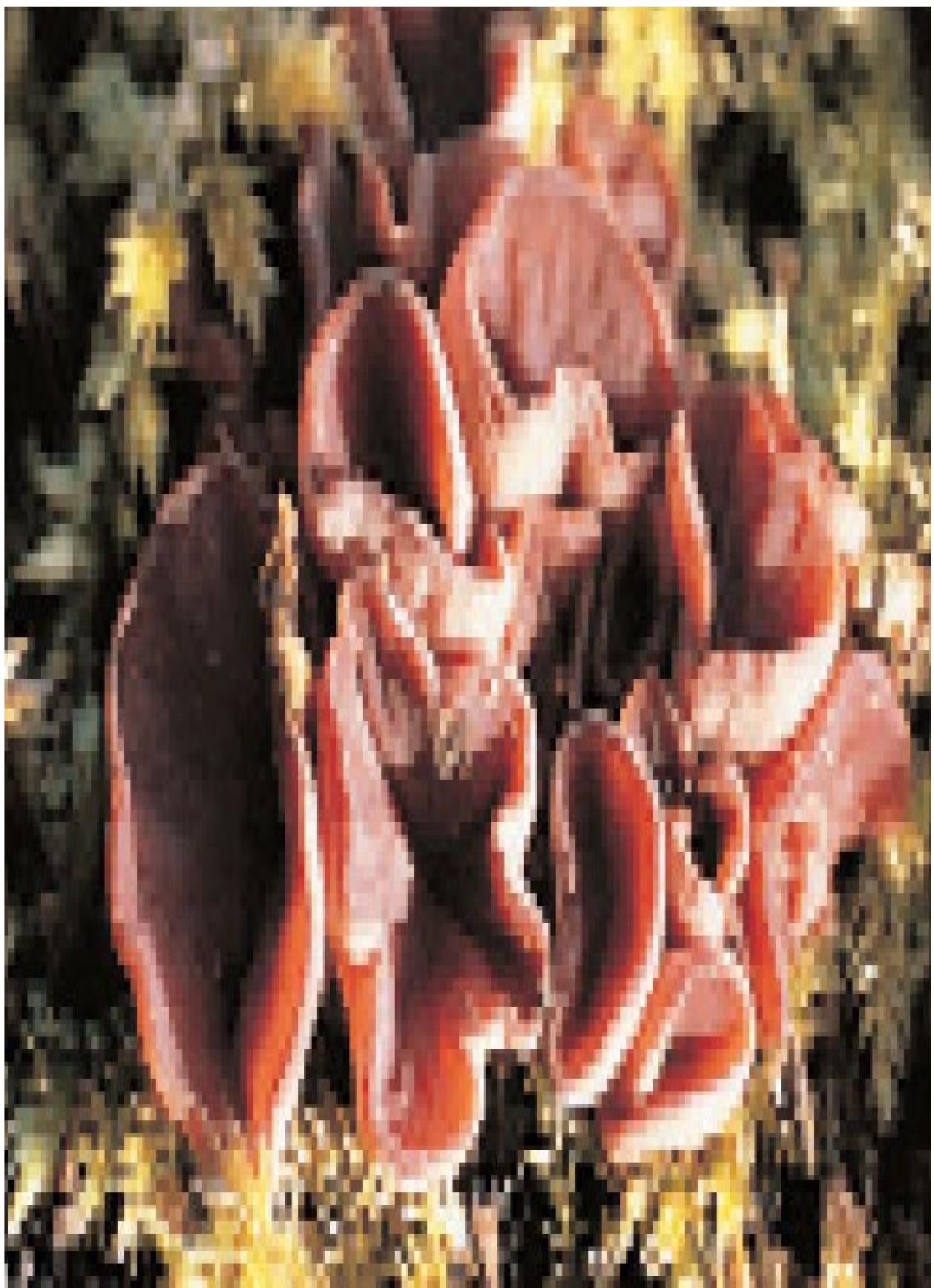
**SEASON** Autumn and into early winter.

**INEDIBLE** Like eating rubber!

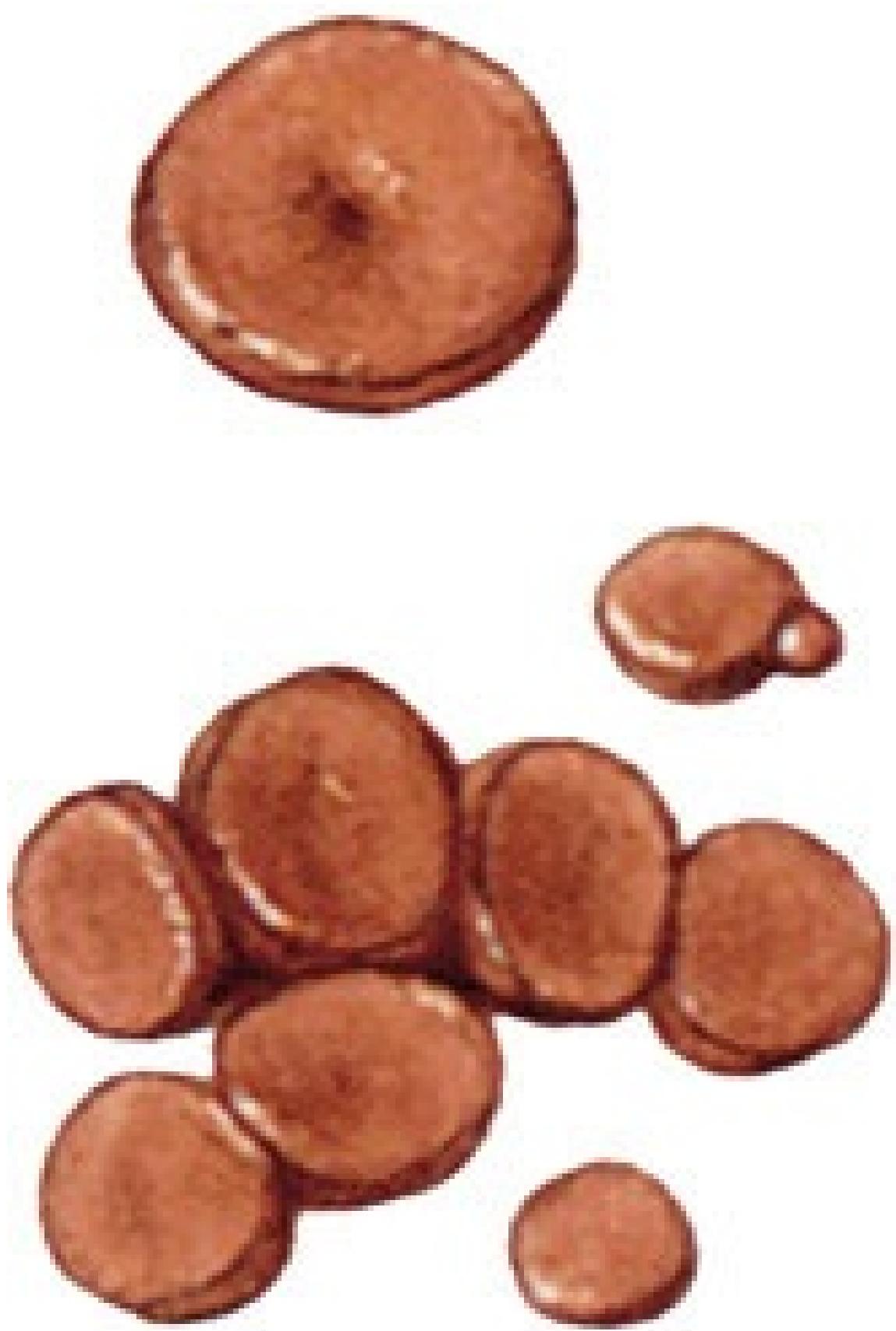
**SIMILAR SPECIES** Witch's Butter is less firm, has a warty surface and does not leave a black mark.

## Purple Jelly Fungus

*Ascocoryne sarcoides*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

The soft jelly-like consistency is similar to that of the basidiomycete Jelly Fungi (Jew's Ear-Jelly Antler Fungus). The tiny purple-pink, spherical fruitbody becomes more like an inverted cone with a smooth flat disc or saucer-shaped top and a very short stalk. The disc edges are wavy and frequently distorted by the proximity of neighbouring fruitbodies. *Coryne sarcoides* indicates the similar asexual stage.

**SIZE 0.5-1.5 cm diameter.**

**HABITAT** Gregarious. Clustered on barkless dead wood of broad-leaved trees, especially beech.

**SEASON** Most frequent in autumn and winter.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *A. cylindrinum* has larger spores. *Neobulgaria pura* is a pale flesh colour.

## **EARTH TONGUE FAMILY**

## Shaggy Earth Tongue

*Trichoglossum hirsutum*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The dark brown to black fruitbody is not much bigger than a matchstick. It is club-shaped with a smooth, flattened, tongue-like fertile head region which narrows abruptly to a more cylindrical, velvety stem.

**SIZE** 3-8 cm tall.

**HABITAT** Among moss in wet acid grassland and especially with bog moss (*Sphagnum*).

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** On sandy soils the Smooth Earth Tongue (*Geoglossum cookeianum*) is smaller, with a less distinct head region and smooth stem. The rare Green Earth Tongue (*Microglossum viride*) grows in moss under trees.

## CLAVICIPITACEAE FAMILY

## Scarlet Caterpillar Fungus

*Cordyceps militaris*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

The tiny finger-like fruitbodies stand out because of their bright colour. The lower part is cylindrical, smooth and curving; it merges into the slightly broader, rough-surfaced, fertile apex. It grows from a buried dead caterpillar or pupa.

**SIZE** 2-5 cm high, 0.5 cm wide.

**HABITAT** Solitary or in small groups emerging from a buried butterfly larva or pupa which the fungus has killed. In grassland or among woodland leaf litter.

**SEASON** Late summer to late autumn.

**INEDIBLE** Used as a Chinese ‘herbal’ medicine.

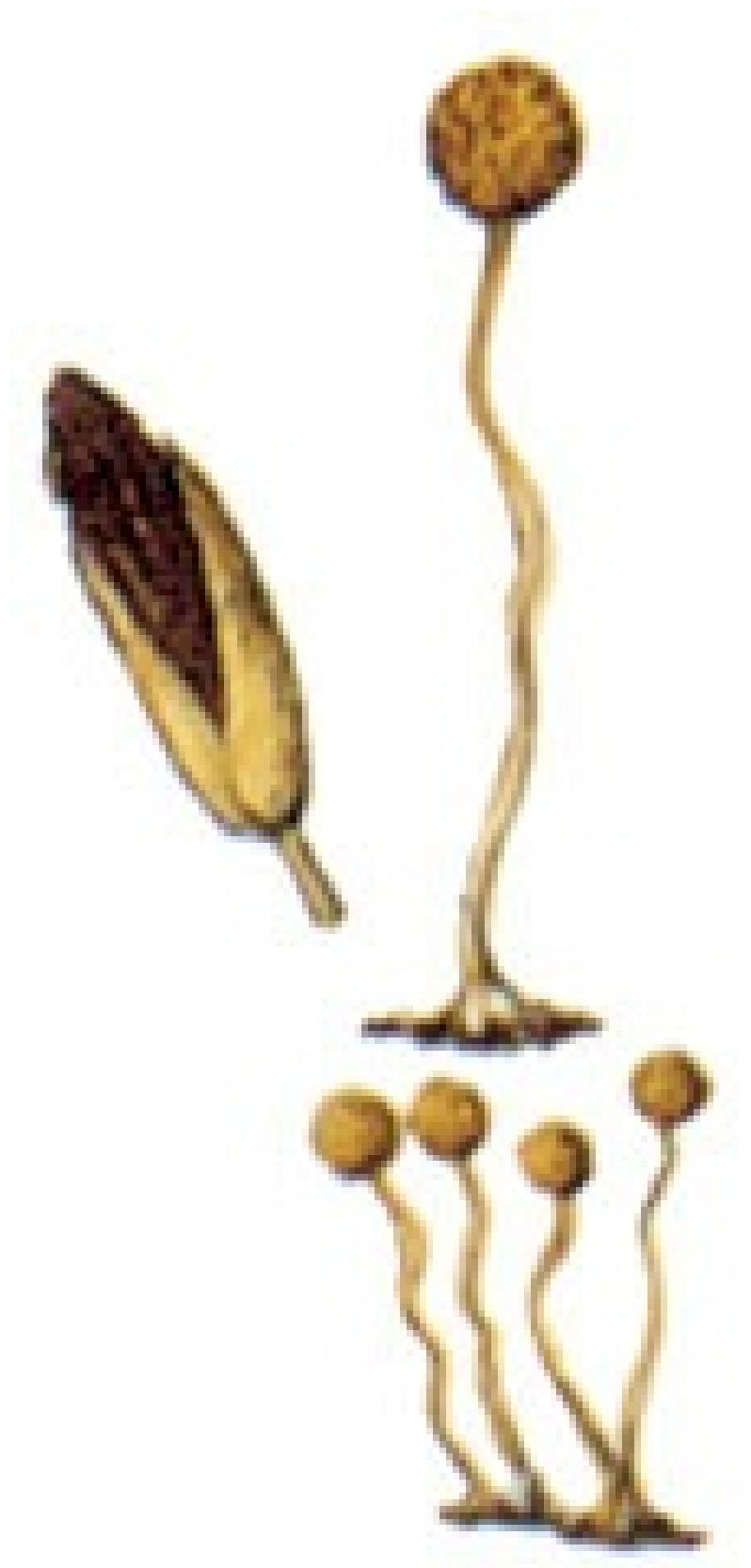
**SIMILAR SPECIES** The yellow-brown *C. ophioglossoides* parasitises the False Truffle. See also the smooth-surfaced Orange Clubs.

## Ergot

*Claviceps purpurea*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Autumnal inspection of grass flower heads may reveal a small, brown-black, hard, banana-shaped object. This Ergot sclerotium (resting stage) falls to the ground and produces tiny, drumstick-shaped fruitbodies in spring (see inset). These bear sticky spores which infect grasses (and cereals) via their stigmas and take over the flower to produce a sclerotium. The cause of ergotism from contaminated flour.

**SIZE** Sclerotium varies with host: 5-20 mm x 2-4 mm.

**HABITAT** On the flowers of grasses and cereals.

**SEASON** Late summer to autumn.

**POISONOUS** Used medicinally to prevent haemorrhage after childbirth and to ease migraine.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** None.

## UNDERGROUND FUNGI

## Summer Truffle

*Tuber aestivum*



Patrick Harding



Patrick Harding

Although not as prized as those found in France and Italy, this used to be collected by professionals and their dogs. It is about the size, shape and colour of a squash ball but covered with pyramidal-shaped warts, thus looking like a rounded pine cone. The inside is pale brown, marbled white, with a strong but pleasant smell and a nutty taste.

**SIZE** 3-7 cm in diameter.

**HABITAT** Buried in the ground under broad-leaved trees; mostly under beech on chalky soil.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn.

**EDIBLE** Small amounts are used as flavouring.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The smaller Winter Truffle (*T. brumale*) has grey marbled flesh. Black Truffle (*T. melanosporum*) has grooved polygonal warts but is not found in Britain.

## False Truffle

*Elaphomyces granulatus*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

This is perhaps the most frequently found of the subterranean fungi especially as it is often parasitised by the club-shaped fungus *Cordyceps ophioglossoides* which emerges above ground. Firm and about the size and shape of a large marble, its thick warty, red-brown skin surrounds the flecked, purple-brown flesh which darkens as the spores mature. It has no distinctive smell.

**SIZE** 2-4 cm diameter.

**HABITAT** Just below the surface in woodland soil; most frequent in conifer woods, especially with pine.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Has been used to adulterate edible truffles.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** The Red Truffle (*Tuber rufum*) has a redder, almost smooth skin.

## CANDLE SNUFF FAMILY

## Candle Snuff Fungus

*Xylaria hypoxylon*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

One of the commonest wood-rotting fungi. The small, erect, tough fruitbody is simple and finger-shaped or more often strap-like and forked at its apex giving it an antler shape. It is also known as Stag's Horn Fungus. Typically black and downy near the base but grey-white on the upper regions; it becomes all black and warty during the winter.

**SIZE** 3-5 cm high, stalk region 2-5 mm wide.

**HABITAT** Dead wood, especially on rotting stumps of broad-leaved trees.  
Rarely on conifers.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** It is very tough.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *X. carpophyla* is more slender, less branched and grows among leaf litter on old beech fruits.

## Dead Man's Fingers

*Xylaria polymorpha*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

As its name implies, the clusters of hard, warty, finger-like fruitbodies are distinctly macabre in appearance. Initially grey-brown or brown, the upper region is swollen, flattened and occasionally lobed; it tapers to a short, similar-coloured stalk region. The inside is firm and white under the black outer, spore-bearing layer.

**SIZE** 3-7 cm high, 1-3 cm wide.

**HABITAT** On or around old beech stumps.

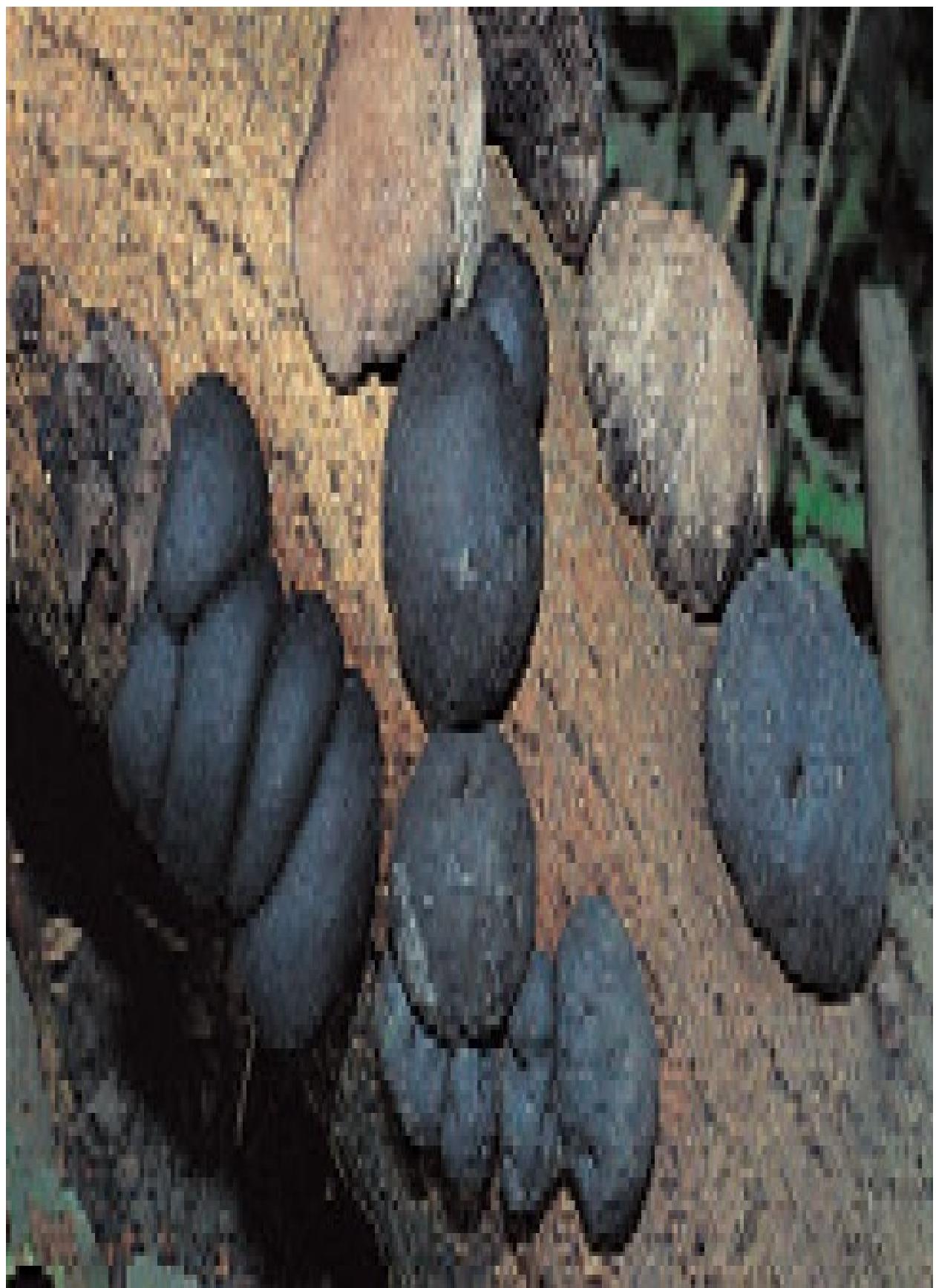
**SEASON** Summer through to spring. Old ones persist.

**INEDIBLE** Very hard.

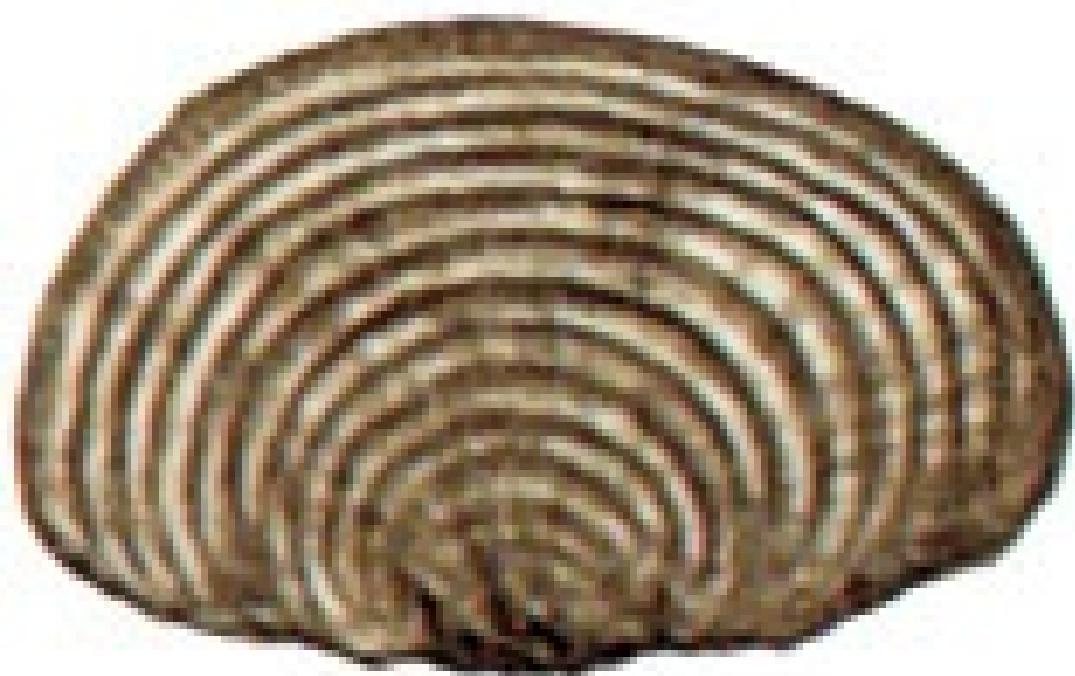
**SIMILAR SPECIES** *X. longipes* has much more slender cylindrical fruitbodies. It grows from buried dead branches of broad-leaved trees, especially sycamore.

## King Alfred's Cakes

*Daldinia concentrica*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Old fruitbodies are hard, black, light in weight and shiny, looking like burnt cakes. When cut open they reveal concentric light and dark zones, similar to charcoal. When young they are red-brown, heavy and have a matt surface. They are hemispherical or cushion-shaped; often lobed but stalkless, the fruitbody being attached by a broad, flat area.

**SIZE** 2-7 cm across.

**HABITAT** Attached to dead wood of broad-leaved trees; mostly on ash and beech.

**SEASON** Summer to autumn. Old ones persist for many years.

**INEDIBLE** A folk remedy to relieve night cramps and is called Cramp Balls for this reason.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Ustulina deusta* forms grey-black crusts on dead stumps especially of beech.

## **BARK SPOT FAMILY**

## **Beech Bark Spot**

*Diatrype disciformis*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Common, but often overlooked, on beech where the tiny, hard, dark brown to black circular or polygonal disc-shaped fruitbodies burst through the bark. Hundreds together make a regular pattern and darken the colour of the bark. A lens reveals that the flat upper surface of the disc is roughened.

**SIZE** 2-3 mm diameter.

**HABITAT** Gregarious and pushing through the bark of small dead branches of beech. Rare on other broad-leaved trees.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Mostly buried in bark.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** *Melogramma bulliardii* forms grey discs on the bark of hazel and birch. *Hypoxylon fragiforme* produces small, brown hard lumps on beech.

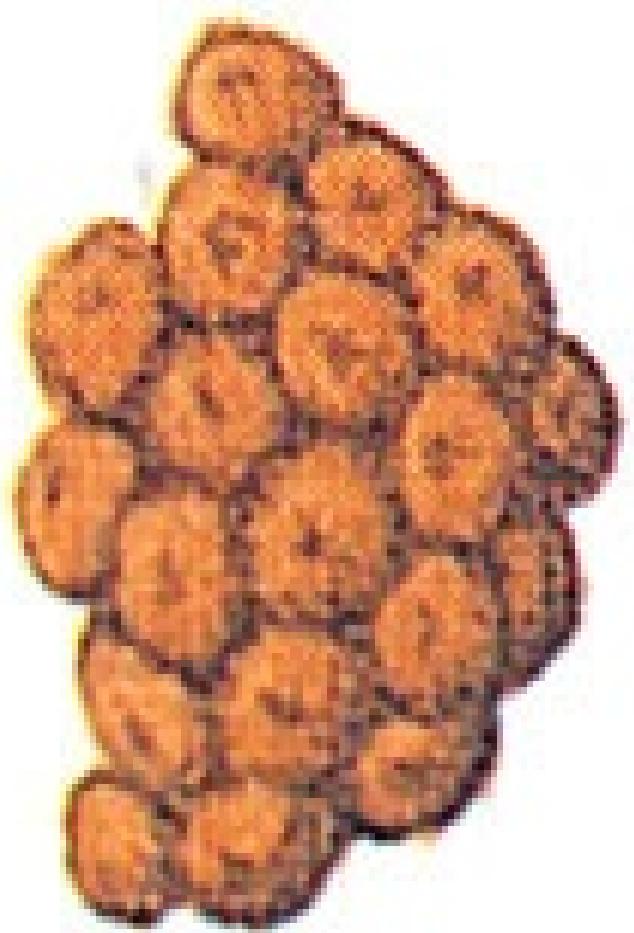
## CORAL SPOT FAMILY

## Coral Spot

*Nectria cinnabarina*



Alan Outen



Alan Outen

Gregarious on small dead twigs or other wood where the hundreds of minute, cushion-like, dry fruitbodies may almost cover the surface. Most commonly found is the pale orange-pink, non-sexual form which is strictly known as *Tubercularia vulgaris*. The true sexual form is dark red or red-brown with a bumpy surface. Both forms occasionally grow together.

**SIZE** 0.5-1.0 mm diameter.

**HABITAT** Usually on dead branches and twigs of broad-leaved trees and shrubs. Often on wood piles.

**SEASON** Throughout the year.

**INEDIBLE** Insubstantial.

**SIMILAR SPECIES** Orange Jelly produces hundreds of tiny fruitbodies on dead wood but when fresh these are very soft and orange in colour.

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HarperCollinsPublishers

77-85 Fulham Palace Road

Hammersmith

London W6 8JB

[www.harpercollins.co.uk](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk)

First published 1996

© Patrick Harding (text) 1996, 2003

The artwork is by John Wilkinson

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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EPub Edition © APRIL 2012 ISBN: 9780007448562



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