

= Ramariopsis kunzei =

*Ramariopsis kunzei* is an edible species of coral fungi in the Clavariaceae family , and the type species of the genus *Ramariopsis* . It is commonly known as white coral because of the branched structure of the fruit bodies that resemble marine coral . The fruit bodies are up to 5 cm ( 2 @. @ 0 in ) tall by 4 cm ( 1 @. @ 6 in ) wide , with numerous branches originating from a short rudimentary stem . The branches are one to two millimeters thick , smooth , and white , sometimes with yellowish tips in age . *Ramariopsis kunzei* has a widespread distribution , and is found in North America , Europe , Asia , and Australia .

= = Taxonomy and phylogeny = =

The species was first described as *Clavaria kunzei* by pioneer mycologist Elias Magnus Fries in 1821 . E.J.H. Corner transferred the species to *Ramariopsis* in 1950 , and made it the type species . In general , coral fungi often have extensive taxonomic histories , as mycologists have not agreed on the best way to classify them . In addition to *Clavaria* and *Ramariopsis* , the *R. kunzei* has been placed in the genera *Ramaria* by Lucien Quélet in 1888 , and *Clavulinopsis* by Walter Jülich in 1985 . According to the taxonomic database MycoBank , the species has acquired a sizable list of synonyms , listed in the taxobox . It is commonly known as white coral because of the branched structure of the fruit bodies that resemble marine coral .

A phylogenetic analysis of clavarioid fungi concluded that *R. kunzei* is in a phylogenetic lineage together with several *Clavulinopsis* species ( including *C. sulcata* , *C. helvola* and *C. fusiformis* ) , and that this clade ( the ramariopsis clade ) is nested within a group of species representing the Clavariaceae family .

= = Description = =

The fruit bodies of *Ramariopsis kunzei* are white to whitish @-@ yellow in color , and are highly branched structures resembling coral ; the dimensions are typically up to 8 cm ( 3 @. @ 1 in ) tall and 6 cm ( 2 @. @ 4 in ) wide . Older specimens may have a pinkish tinge . The tips of the branches are blunt , not crested as in some other species of coral fungi , like *Clavulina cristata* ; branches are between 1 and 5 millimeters thick . The branch tips of mature specimens may be yellow . A stem , if present , may be up to 1 cm ( 0 @. @ 4 in ) long and scurfy ? covered with small flakes or scales . The texture of the flesh may range from pliable to brittle . This fungus does not undergo any color changes upon bruising or injury , however , a 10 % solution of FeSO<sub>4</sub> ( a chemical test known as " iron salts " ) applied to the flesh will turn it green .

In deposit , the spores are white . Viewed with a light microscope , the spores are translucent and have an ellipsoid to roughly spherical shape with spines on the surface , and dimensions of 3 ? 5 @. @ 5 by 2 @. @ 5 ? 4 @. @ 5 µm . Spores are non @-@ amyloid , meaning that they do not absorb iodine when stained with Melzer 's reagent . The spore @-@ bearing cells , the basidia , are usually 25 ? 45 µm long by 6 ? 7 µm wide , and 4 @-@ spored . Clamp connections are present in the hyphae of this species .

= = = Edibility = = =

The species is edible , but " fleshless and flavorless . " Other authors concur that the odor and taste are not distinctive .

= = = Similar species = = =

The " crested coral " ( *Clavulina cristata* , edible ) is similar in appearance to *R. kunzei* , but its branches have fringed , feathery tips . The " jellied false coral " ( *Tremellodendron pallidum* , edible ) has whitish , tough , cartilaginous branches with blunt tips .

## = = Habitat and distribution = =

The species is thought to be saprobic and can be found growing on the ground , in duff , or less frequently on well @-@ decayed wood . Fruit bodies may grow singly , in groups , or clustered together . David Arora has noted a preference for growing under conifers , as well as a prevalence in redwood forests of North America . In contrast , an earlier author claimed this species grows " rarely in coniferous woods . "

In Europe , *Ramariopsis kunzei* has been collected in Scotland ( specifically , on the islands of Arran , Gigha and Kintyre peninsula ) , the Netherlands , Norway , former Czechoslovakia , Germany , Poland , and Russia ( Zhiguli Mountains ) . It has also been found in China , India , Iran , the Solomon Islands , and Australia . In North America , the distribution extends north to Canada , and includes the United States ( including Hawaii and Puerto Rico ) .