= Guepinia =

Guepinia is a genus of fungus in the Auriculariales order . It is a monotypic genus , containing the single species Guepinia helvelloides , commonly known as the apricot jelly . The fungus produces salmon @-@ pink , ear @-@ shaped , gelatinous fruit bodies that grow solitarily or in small tufted groups on soil , usually associated with buried rotting wood . The fruit bodies are 4 ? 10 cm (1 @.@ 6 ? 3 @.@ 9 in) tall and up to 17 cm (6 @.@ 7 in) wide ; the stalks are not well @-@ differentiated from the cap . The fungus , although rubbery , is edible , and may be eaten raw with salads , pickled , or candied . It has a white spore deposit , and the oblong to ellipsoid spores measure 9 ? 11 by 5 ? 6 micrometers . The fungus is widely distributed in the Northern Hemisphere , and has also been collected from South America .

= = Taxonomy = =

The species was first described and illustrated as Tremella rufa by Nicolaus Joseph von Jacquin in 1778 . Elias Magnus Fries later (1828) called it Guepinia helvelloides in his Elenchus Fungorum , based on Augustin Pyramus de Candolle 's Tremella helvelloides , both being names he sanctioned . This has made Tremella rufa and all names based on it unavailable for use , as they are conserved . Later , Lucien Quélet erected a separate monotypic genus Phlogiotis for Jacquin 's species , whereas Julius Oscar Brefeld placed it (as Gyrocephalus rufa) in Persoon 's small genus Gyrocephalus (rejected name for Gyromitra) . The proper name for the fungus was debated for some time , as the name Guepinia is a homonym (pointed out by Fries in 1828) , because it had been used by Toussaint Bastard in 1812 for a genus of flowering plants in the Cruciferae family . To further complicate matters , the generic name Teesdalia , originally considered to have priority over the name Guepinia for the plant genus , was later determined to have been validly published after Guepinia , rendering Teesdalia an illegitimate name . In 1982 , changes in the International Code for Botanical Nomenclature gave protected status to all names adopted by Fries in the Elenchus Fungorum , and established Guepinia as the correct genus name .

Guepinia is variously classified in the Auriculariales order , with uncertain familial position (incertae sedis) , or as part of the Exidiaceae family .

The genus is named after French mycologist Jean @-@ Pierre Guépin (1779 ? 1858) . The mushroom is commonly known as the " red jelly fungus " , or " apricot jelly " .

= = Description = =

The fruit bodies of Guepinia helvelloides grow singly or in small clumps . Although they can appear to be growing in the soil , their mycelium lives in buried wood . They are 4 ? 10 cm (1 @.@ 6 ? 3 @.@ 9 in) tall and 3 ? 17 cm (1 @.@ 2 ? 6 @.@ 7 in) wide , spoon- or tongue @-@ shaped , and twisted like a cornet or horn so that they look like a slender funnel , cut out on one side and often with a wavy margin . The fruit bodies are flexible , 2 ? 3 @.@ 5 mm (0 @.@ 08 ? 0 @.@ 14 in) thick , and smooth on the outer side which they are usually attenuated on the underside into a cylindrical or depressed stem that is up to 5 cm (2 @.@ 0 in) high and about 1 @.@ 5 cm (0 @.@ 6 in) thick . The stem is normally covered with a white tomentum at the base . The upper side (inside) of the fruit body is usually quite sterile or with a few isolated basidia and is slightly verrucose as a result of the densely crowded protruding ends of the hyphae . The sterile and fertile surfaces of the fruit body are almost the same color , transparent reddish @-@ orange to flesh pink or flesh orange , at other times more purplish @-@ red . The fruit bodies usually develop a slightly brownish tinge when they are old . The underside is usually slightly more vividly colored than the upper side . The flesh is gelatinous , softly so in the upper part of the fruit body and with a more cartilage @-@ like consistency in the stem . It has a nondescript odor , and a watery , insignificant taste .

The hymenium is developed on the under (outer) side of the fruit body . The basidia (spore @-@ bearing cells) consist of a globular part (the hypobasidia) to which inflated or elongated epibasidia are attached . In Guepinia , the hypobasidia are egg @-@ shaped to ellipsoid , measuring 12 ? 16

by 9 ? 12 ?m , and attached to fibril @-@ like epibasidia that are 20 ? 45 by 3 ? 4 ?m . The spore deposit is white , while the spores are 9 ? 11 by 5 ? 6 ?m , hyaline (translucent) , cylindrical to elongated ellipsoid in shape , and have a large oil drop .

= = = Edibility = = =

Guepinia helvelloides is an edible , but bland , fungus . Older specimens are usually tough and indigestible . It can be used raw in salads , for pickling in vinegar and also for preserving in sugar like candied fruit . One source reports using it to prepare a wine by fermenting with wine yeast .

= = = Similar species = = =

Guepinia helvelloides has a rather unusual appearance , and is not likely to be mistaken for other fungi . However , the red chanterelle species Cantharellus cinnabarinus is superficially similar ; unlike G. helvelloides , however , it does not have a rubbery and gelatinous texture , and its undersurface is wrinkled , not smooth .

= = Habitat and distribution = =

Guepinia helvelloides is saprobic , deriving nutrients by breaking down organic matter . The fruit bodies of G. helveloides typically grow solitarily or in small tufts on soil , usually in association with buried rotting wood . Although the fruit bodies sometimes appear in the spring , they are more commonly found in the summer and autumn months . In North America , it is associated with coniferous forests . It is also found throughout temperate North America , from Canada to Mexico . Europe , Iran , and Turkey . It is also known from Brazil and Puerto Rico . The fungus has also been collected from the Qinling region of China .