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# Fungus of the Month - April 2008



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## *Poronia erici*

*Poronia erici* is a common fungus and in Western Australia can be found in all habitats that support the western grey kangaroo. Its common name is dung buttons, as it fruits only on the scats of herbivorous mammals. The fruits have a tough texture and are generally 2 to 5 mm in diameter, they but can be as large as 10 mm. They have a dark brown bowl-shaped base and a flat, beige top that is punctured by tiny irregular sized pores. Spores are produced in small flask-shaped receptacles embedded in the fruit and released through the pores which form the opening of the receptacle. Dung buttons can be very common, especially on open recently burnt sites with lush new plant growth that attracts a lot of kangaroos. Sometimes up to 25 buttons can be found on a single scat. In the southwest and other regions of southern Australia, dung buttons can also be found fruiting on wallaby, kangaroo, wombat, rabbit, sheep, goats and sometimes cow and horse dung.

The scientific name, describes the appearance of the fungus and its common habitat: *por-*: pores, *-onia*: pertaining to or related to, *eric-*: heath (likely referring to open heathlands where it is commonly found).