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Fungus of the Month - August 2008



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Calostoma fuscum

Calostoma fuscum belongs to a group of ornamented, stalked puffball fungi commonly referred to as 'pretty mouths'. The cap is supported on a stem constructed of interwoven strands of tough gelatinised material. The apex of the cap is protected in young specimens by a scull cap-like structure that falls off at maturity to reveal the red ornamented pore through which its powdery spores are released. *C. fuscum* is not a common fungus in WA, and prefers to fruit in moist shady positions. Other species of *Calostoma* are more common on sandy soils in woodland or coastal heath, and may have different coloured pores or 'mouths' on the apex of their caps.

The scientific name refers to the coloured ornamentation at the top of the fungus: *calo-*: beautiful, *stom-*: mouth, *fusc-*: fuscous (dark coloured)