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Fungus of the Month - September 2009



Mycena carmeliana

The genus *Mycena* contains many species of fungi. They are all decomposers, colonising and rotting dead organic material ranging from litter and small twigs to large logs. In Western Australia, *Mycena carmeliana* prefers to grow on dead jarrah logs and large fallen branches that are in the very early stages of decay; generally before the bark has fallen off. It grows in large colonies, protruding from behind the bark through cracks or along the edge of the bark where a portion of the wood is bare. The caps are generally 10-20 mm in diameter with a brown centre and radial grooves around the margin. The stem has a distinctive ginger or chestnut coloured base which resembles a short fluffy sock. The whole fruit body has a weak to strong bleach- or ammonia-like odour. Most *Mycenas*, including *M. carmeliana* fruit in the autumn.

In other parts of Australia, *M. carmeliana* can also be found fruiting on litter in young radiata pine plantations as well as eucalypt wood and logs

The Scientific name refers to the Greek/Latin term for mushroom and the describing scientist honouring her mother. *Myc-*: fungus or mushroom, *mycena*: the ancient term for mushroom, *carmel-*: named in honour of Carmel Grgurinovic, *-iana*: pertaining to.