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Tremella mesenterica — yellow brain

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Tremella mesenterica is commonly called the yellow brain fungus. It's common in all forests and woodlands of southern and eastern Australia. In the southwest it can be found throughout the winter months, usually growing on marri logs and dead bull banksia (*Banksia grandis*) wood.

This fungus belongs to a group commonly referred to as jelly fungi. It has a convoluted, lobed shape, is yellow to orange-yellow in colour and can be up to 15cm in diameter. The surface is smooth and moist, and as the common name suggests, the texture is that of firm jelly. Although *Tremella mesenterica* inhabits and decays wood, it is also thought to be parasitic on another wood inhabiting species, *Stereum hirsutum* (see two small fruit bodies above the *Tremella*, and inset). However, it's not common to see them both fruiting at the same time.

A similar species, *Tremella aurantia*, is virtually indistinguishable from *Tremella mesenterica* and microscopic examination is needed to tell them apart.

The Scientific name refers to its texture or consistency and its resemblance to an intestine, which contradicts its common name: *tremell*:- trembling, *mesenter*:- middle-intestine, *-ica*: pertaining to, belonging to.