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Fungus of the Month - July 2006



Cortinarius sp.

Despite being distinctive and common in jarrah forest, this species appears to be undescribed.

Cortinarius is a large genus that is divided into several readily recognised subgenera. The above species belongs to the subgenus *Myxacium*, which is characterised by a glutinous coating on both the cap and the stem. In the button stage, *Cortinarius* sp. has a cobweb-like veil that stretches between the cap margin and the stem to cover and protect the young developing gills. The remains of the veil can be seen on the above specimens as an orange-brown zone near the top of the stem. The brown colour is due to a dusting of spores that gathers on the veil as the mushrooms mature. All species of *Cortinarius* have brown spores. Note that the stem above the veil remnants is dry, not glutinous. The glutinous coat covers the whole button but the upper stem is enveloped by the developing cap and protective veil, so when the mushroom is fully developed the upper stem remains dry. *Cortinarius* sp. is very similar to *C. sinapicolor* (Inset) but is darker and more even in colour and has a white rather than yellow stem.