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# Fungus of the Month - September 2006



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## *Ileodictyon gracile*

*Ileodictyon gracile*, or the basket fungus, is common in both forest and urban areas in the southwest. It belongs to a group commonly referred to as stink horns. The latticed basket-like structure develops within a spherical receptacle or 'egg' from which it erupts in the later stages of development. The 'eggs' may develop to be about 30 mm diameter. They are creamy white with a firm texture and sit on the surface of the ground. The above photo shows several 'eggs' in various stages of development. The cut specimen (*front right*) shows an early stage with the basket developing within a slimy olive-brown mass of spores. The fully developed, but tightly packed, basket eventually erupts (*front left*) and rapidly expands to its full size of about 80 mm diameter when the 'egg' splits. The spore mass, which sticks to the lattice structure, has a foul odour that attracts flies and other insects that help to spread the spores.