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Fungus of the Month - December 2006



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Aecidium eburneum

Aecidium eburneum, or water bush rust, infects the fruits of *Bossiaea aquifolium* (water bush or netic). It is common in the southwest and can be found in early summer in both jarrah and karri forest where water bush occurs. Water bush rust is easily recognised by its bright orange colour and small, clustered, stalked cup-like fruit bodies. The technical name for the cup is an aecium, which explains its Latin name. The margins of the tiny cups are delicately ornamented. Rust fungi are interesting in that they may have up to five different stages in their life cycle. Each stage may produce a different type of spore and many rusts must infect at least two unrelated hosts in order to complete their life cycle. Water bush rust is only known from its aeciospore stage and the alternative host is unknown.

The Latin name - what it means: *Aecium*- spore bearing structure, producing chains of aeciospores; *eburne*- ivory.