

LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

This PDF has been created for digital preservation. It may be used for research but is not suitable for other purposes. It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

Fungus of the Month - December 2007



© Richard Robinson

Laccocephalum mylittae

Aboriginal people from different tribes once referred to *Laccocephalum mylittae*, or native bread, with their own unique names, but unfortunately no Nyungar name was recorded. In Western Australia, the mushroom-like fruit bodies (*see inset*) appear soon after bushfires in karri forest. They are large (up to 20 cm or more across) flat or dome-shaped with an irregular lobed or pleated margin and a white pore layer underneath. It is a fascinating fungus. Although it is a wood decay fungus, the fruit body develops from a large underground organ called a sclerotium. The sclerotium develops in the soil close to buried wood or a log that the fungus is decomposing, and it appears to be stimulated to fruit by fire. When fresh the sclerotium has a firm rubbery and marbled structure (*above right*). Early Europeans recorded Aboriginal people searching for the underground sclerotia, which they ate either raw or cooked. The development of the fruit body completely exhausts the food reserves in the sclerotium, which then gradually disintegrates (*above left*) leaving no sign of its former presence.