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## Fungus of the Month - March 2008



### *Piptoporus australiensis* - curry punk

The curry punk fungus, *Piptoporus australiensis*, is common on karri trees and logs in late summer. On living trees it generally develops a bracket-like fruit body on the trunk, or near the base on fire scars. The colour, size and texture make it easy to recognise. Brackets can grow to 50 cm or more wide and be up to 20 cm thick. When fresh it is bright orange, smooth or greasy on the upper surface and a layer of pores on the underside. The flesh is rubbery, but very juicy making the brackets quite heavy. The juice is a good dye and stains materials yellow. The brackets persist for some months, but rain tends to fade them as they age. When dry they have a distinctive curry odour, hence the common name of curry punk. The fungus causes a brown cubical rot in the heartwood of trees that is readily visible in well-rotted logs.

The scientific name, describes the nature and distribution of the fungus: *pipt-*: easily detachable, falling off, *por-*: pores (referring to pores on underside), *austral-*: southern, *ensis-*: indicates place of growth or origin.