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Fungus of the Month - May 2008



Gymnopilus junonius

Gymnopilus junonius forms large spectacular clusters of golden-brown to orange-brown mushrooms on stumps and buried wood or at the base of living trees. Individual mushrooms may be up to 20 cm in diameter. They have a solid texture and caps are generally dome-shaped, with a covering of soft brown scales on the surface. Stems are thick and robust with a non-persistent ring just below the cap and orange brown fibrils on the lower portion (*see inset above*). Mushrooms produce copious amounts of rusty brown spores that often form a dusty coating on the surface of clustered caps and on the upper stem.

Gymnopilus junonius is a common fungus, found throughout Australia as well as New Zealand, East Africa, Europe, North America and parts of South America. In early autumn in Western Australia it can be found in parks, gardens, pine and bluegum plantations as well as native forests and woodlands.

What the scientific name means: *gymn-*: naked, *pil-* or *pile-*: usually means pileus or cap of a mushroom, *junonius-*: pertaining to Juno, the wife of Jupiter.