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# Fungus of the Month - March 2009



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## *Hebeloma aminophilum* -Ghoul fungus

The Ghoul fungus, *Hebeloma aminophilum*, is aptly named because it grows beside or near the remains of decaying animal carcasses. The mushrooms can be large, up to 11 cm in diameter and 12 cm tall, and can often occur in large numbers. The domed to flat caps are pinkish-brown with a tan margin and are sticky when fresh. Pink gills on the underside of the cap produce pinkish-brown spores. The Ghoul fungus is common throughout the south west forests and woodlands, generally fruiting in the late autumn. Sometimes it will fruit amongst the same bones each autumn for a number of consecutive years. A similar species, *Hebeloma westraliensis*, also occurs in the south west but it is not associated with dead animals.

The Latin name describes the shape of the mushroom and its preference for decomposed animal remains: *hebe-*: blunt or obtuse, *amino-*: amino acid, *-phil-*: loving.