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## Fungus of the Month - November 2009



### *Psilocybe coprophila*

*Psilocybe coprophila* is a small but distinct brown mushroom that fruits on dung. In the south-west it is found mainly on dung of the western grey kangaroo. Organisms that live on dung are referred to as being coprophilous. Caps are small, rarely larger than 12 mm, chestnut in colour with light brown scales near the margin, which may be pleated, defining lines of the underlying gills. The surface is usually shiny due to its sticky surface. The crowded gills are brown then become black as they mature and the thin stems are covered in fine light brown scales.

*Psilocybe coprophila* usually fruits in the autumn and may continue to be found up until the early spring in all habitats, from coastal heath to forest, where you find kangaroos. Generally just one or two mushrooms are found on a single scat, but occasionally you may find up to 10 or 12. They don't appear to fruit on fresh scats or those in an advanced state of decomposition.

The Latin/Greek scientific name refers to the similarity of the shiny cap to that of a balding head and the fact that it is found on dung; *psil*-: naked, *cybe*-: head, *copr*-: dung, *phil*-: loving, fond of.