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Fungus of the Month - September 2010



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Russula clelandii

Russula clelandii is a very common species in jarrah forest; fruiting on the ground amongst leaf litter in early autumn. When fully developed the cap is up to 7 cm in diameter, dome-shaped at first then expanding to become flat with a depressed centre. The colour of the cap varies from scarlet red to purple red but generally fades with age around the margin. The very neat gills are pure white and then become yellowish cream as they mature. The stem may be up to 7 cm tall with a distinctive pink dotted surface on a white background. The intensity of the pink colouring can be very variable, sometimes very pale or rudimentary, but is always present.

Russulas are very common in jarrah forest and a number of species have red caps. *Russula clelandii* is one of the most common species and is easily distinguished by its pinkish stem. Russulas also have a distinct texture, making their stems snap like chalk when they are bent.

During the next few months other species of *Russula* will be featured.

The Latin/Greek scientific name; *russ-*: reddish (likely referring to the colour of the Northern hemisphere type specimen for *Russula*, *Russula emetrica*, which has a red cap); *-ula*: pertaining to; *clelandii* -: after the distinguished South Australian naturalist and amateur mycologist Dr JB Cleland (1878-1921).