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Fungus of the Month - February 2011



Russula sp. 'white'

Russula sp. is an unnamed species that is common in jarrah forest in early to late autumn. It has also been found in karri forest, but its distribution in other forest types and woodlands is not known. It is a distinct species in that the cap, gills and stem are all pure white, but it usually fruits under the leaf litter and may not be seen. The cap is generally 50-70 mm diameter and has a deep central depression. The cap surface is moist and in older specimens may be discoloured by dull yellow to yellow-brown blotches. The gills are crowded and sometimes forked, either at the margin or close to the stem. The stem is stout, ranging from 25-50 mm tall and is generally hollow.

There are two similar species that are also found in jarrah forest. *Russula albonigra*, which turns black with age or when damaged, and a much smaller unnamed species that tends to fruit under the litter (inset). It is also pure white but the cap is broadly convex with no central depression, usually smaller than 25 mm and the gills are cream.

The scientific name, *Russ-*: reddish, *-ula*: pertaining to, likely refers to the red coloured cap of the Northern hemisphere type specimen for *Russula*, *Russula emetrica* and does not adequately describe these species.