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# Fungus of the Month - January 2012



## *Boletus* sp. - Blue staining bolete

Bolete is the common name for those mushroom-like fungi that have a layer of sponge-like pores on the underside of the cap instead of gills. The blue staining bolete has a large dome-shaped dull maroon cap with yellowish highlights or blotches and expands to about 8 cm diameter when fully developed. The pore layer under the cap is yellow to orange yellow and stains blue when damaged. The stout barrel-shaped stem is up to 6 cm tall and light yellow in colour with minute reddish-maroon dots stippling the surface. The flesh of the mushroom is solid, light creamy yellow but immediately stains blue when cut and exposed to the air. The staining quickly darkens to the intense blue shown in the photo.

Several other species of *Boletus* are similar in colour and have blue-staining flesh. However, the intensity of the blue staining varies, none being as intense as this species. These species are likely closely related and fall within the *Boletus speciosus* complex. Most boletes fruit early in the autumn and many become infected by the parasitic *Hypomyces chrysospermus* (see Fungus of the Month, December 2011) of which the blue staining bolete is a common host.

The scientific name refers to the stature and colour of the fruit body. *Bolet-*, *bolites*: ancient words for a superior kind of mushroom, *specios-*: beautiful or showy.

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