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## *Hypoxylon subbrutilum*

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*Hypoxylon subbrutilans* forms flat purplish-red sheets called *stroma* on the bark of dead stems and twigs of understory shrubs and small trees. It is common in forested areas of the southwest and can be found in late summer and early autumn. Under the coloured powdery surface, the structure of the stroma is hard and carbon-like. Within the stroma context, spores are formed in small vessel-shaped structures called *perithecia* and are released through tiny pore-like openings called *ostioles* that can be seen on the surface.

Species of *Hypoxylon* are thought to be semi-parasitic in living trees, but only actively decay wood once the host tree is dead. There are a number of similar species. *Hypoxylon subcorticium* (Inset, bottom left) forms similar stroma but on bare wood surfaces and *Hypoxylon diatryeoides* (Inset, top right) forms small globular colonies, also on the bark surface of dead stems and twigs.

The scientific name refers its habit and colour. *Hypo-*: prefix meaning below, under, *xylon-*: wood or woody, *sub-*: prefix meaning somewhat, almost (but can also mean below, under), *rutile-*: ruddy or warm red.