



Laccocephalum mylittae — native bread

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Aboriginal people from different southern Australia tribes had their own unique names for *Laccocephalum mylittae*, or native bread, but unfortunately no Nyungar name is recorded.

In Western Australia, the mushroom-like fruit bodies (*inset above*) appear soon after bushfires in karri forest. They are large (up to 20cm or more across) flat or dome-shaped with an irregular lobed or pleated margin and a white pore layer underneath. It is a fascinating fungus. Although it is a wood decay fungus, the fruit body develops from a large underground organ called a sclerotium. The sclerotium develops in the soil close to buried wood or a log that the fungus is decomposing, and it appears to be stimulated to fruit by fire. When fresh, the sclerotium has a firm rubbery and marbled structure (*above right*). Early Europeans recorded Aboriginal people searching for the underground sclerotia, which they ate either raw or cooked. The development of the fruit body completely exhausts the food reserves in the sclerotium, which then gradually disintegrates (*above left*) leaving no sign of its former presence.

What the full scientific name means is unclear. *Lacc-*: paint, *cephal-*: head, *mylitta-*: not known, but the sclerotia was initially thought to be a separate fungus and was named *Mylitta australis* in 1839.