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Gymnopilus junonius — spectacular rustgill

Richard Robinson, Science Division, Manjimup, richard.robinson@dec.wa.gov.au



Gymnopilus junonius, or spectacular rustgill, forms large spectacular clusters of golden-brown to orange-brown mushrooms on stumps and buried wood or at the base of living trees. It's a common fungus, found throughout Australia as well as New Zealand, East Africa, Europe, North America and parts of South America. In the southwest it can be found in parks, gardens, pine and bluegum plantations as well as native forests and woodlands in early autumn.

The mushrooms are large and robust, and fruit in large clusters. Caps may be up to 20cm diameter, dome-shaped to convex, with a covering of soft brown scales on the surface. Gills are crowded, brown becoming rusty. Stems are thick and robust with a non-persistent ring just below the cap and orange brown fibrils on the lower portion (*inset above*). Mushrooms produce copious amounts of rusty brown spores that often form a dusty coating on the surface of clustered caps and on the upper stem.

The scientific name does not appear to relate to the appearance or habit of this fungus. *Gymn-*: naked, *pil-* or *pile-*: usually means pileus or cap of a mushroom, *junonius-*: pertaining to Juno, the wife of Jupiter.