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## *Boletus* sp. — intense blue staining bolete

Richard Robinson, Science Division, Manjimup, [richard.robinson@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:richard.robinson@dec.wa.gov.au)



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Bolete is the common name for a group of mushroom-like fungi that have a layer of sponge-like pores on the underside of the cap instead of gills. The intense blue staining bolete is common in southwest forests and woodlands in early autumn.

Caps are large, up to 8cm diameter, dome-shaped, dull maroon with yellowish highlights or blotches. The pore layer under the cap is yellow to orange yellow and stains blue when damaged. Stems are up to 6cm tall, stout, barrel-shaped, light yellow in colour with minute reddish-maroon dots stippling the surface. Flesh in both the cap and stem 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. Many boletes become infected by the parasitic *Hypomyces chrysospermus* (see Fungus Factsheet 57/2011), of which the blue staining boletes are common hosts.

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.