

LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

This PDF has been created for digital preservation. It may be used for research but is not suitable for other purposes. It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.



Mucronella pendula — icicle fungus

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



© Richard Robinson

Mucronella pendula, or icicle fungus, is found across the wetter forested regions of southern Australia, but is not common. Colonies of its pendulous fruit bodies develop and hang like stalactites from the underside, or within cavities on the end of well-rotted eucalypt or southern beech (*Nothofagus* sp.) logs in mid- to late-autumn. In Western Australia it appears to be restricted to the southwest in karri forest and the wetter gullies in jarrah forest.

Mucronella pendula belongs to a group of fungi informally known as coral fungi. The almost translucent white to whitish-yellow icicle- or spearhead-shaped fruit bodies are delicate with a watery gelatinous texture. The elongated heads are generally about 2cm (but sometimes up to 3cm) long and hang from a short stem. The upper head and stem may have a sparse covering of short white delicate hair-like cells (clearly seen in the photo above) called cystidia. Fruit bodies gradually taper to an acute point, but sometimes may be cylindrical or more club-shaped. With age the fruit bodies become more yellow or buff in colour or they may become very watery and liquefy.

Mucronella pendula is a beautiful and distinctive fungus; its shape, texture and pendulous habit makes it readily identifiable.

The scientific name refers to the size and shape of the fruit body and its hanging habit. *Mucrone-*: *mucronate* or pointed, *-ella*: diminutive (small), *pendulus*: hanging.