

## Fungal identification and mycophagy

### Identification resources:

There is much interest in fungi in the environment but only a small pool of mycologists available to provide feedback. To assist, here are some avenues that members of the public can follow for identification and advice about fungi.

We recommend that general identification requests are sent to **iNaturalist** (<https://inaturalist.nz/> and <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/>) where you can upload your images for ID by a wide network of experts.

When **taking photos** of larger fungi, it is helpful to include a second image showing the underside, such as the lamellae (gills) or a mushroom or the pores of a polypore. Make sure you are close to the fungus and that the image is in focus. For further tips on how to best take a photograph of mushrooms in order to get a confident ID, see <https://inaturalist.nz/journal/cooperj/35101-identifying-fungi-in-new-zealand>

On iNaturalist, you can upload multiple images of the one observation. By posting images on iNaturalist you are contributing to improving knowledge of the distribution and habitat preferences of Australian fungi. You can add observations to projects, such as the **Fungimap Australia project** <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fungimap-australia>, that facilitates recording of host and substrate information.

### Mycophagy and poisoning:

If you have eaten a fungus and are concerned, in **Australia**, contact the **Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26)** and in **New Zealand**, contact the **National Poisons Centre (0800 764 766)**.

If you are a pet owner concerned about an animal that has consumed a fungus, you can contact the Australian Animal Poisons Helpline <https://animalpoisons.com.au/> or the New Zealand Animal Poisons Helpline <https://animalpoisons.com.au/news/new-zealand-animal-poisons-helpline>.

If you are asking “can I eat it”, **AMS cannot comment on the edibility of fungi**. AMS recommends that you only consume wild fungi if you are confident of the identification yourself, and have authoritative information on the edibility of the fungus. Take the time to learn the characters used in identifying fungi, and get to know both edible and poisonous species.

Most fungi that occur in parks and gardens are harmless to humans and domestic animals. Toxicity from toxic larger fungi will only occur after ingestion. Touching larger fungi is not harmful, except for very rare cases of allergic reactions to particular fungi (that are person specific). Only one fungus known from Australia is harmful to touch, the Poison Fire Fungus *Trichoderma cornu-damae*, a rare fungus of the wet tropics in Queensland. For a recent article see <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-19/deadly-fungus-poison-fire-coral-warning-for-bushwalkers/13169022>



The Poison Fire Fungus *Trichoderma cornu-damae*

[https://live-production.wcms.abc-cdn.net.au/5d2910f4e96bb7a42efe9f3c083bb4cd?impolicy=wcms\\_crop\\_resize&cropH=810&cropW=1439&xPos=0&yPos=629&width=862&height=485](https://live-production.wcms.abc-cdn.net.au/5d2910f4e96bb7a42efe9f3c083bb4cd?impolicy=wcms_crop_resize&cropH=810&cropW=1439&xPos=0&yPos=629&width=862&height=485)