Welcome to the Kingdom Fungi! The Southern Otways region is home to a rich and fascinating diversity of fungi.

The fungi shown in this guide were recorded during Southern Otways Landcare Network (SOLT) fieldwork in 2005 and 2006. Fungi were measured to a variety of scales to depict size and relative growth habit, as well as a focus on various pigmentation and morphological characteristics. A selection of fungi is also included to provide written descriptions of the diagnostic features. You can also further your identification skills by participating in the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Fungi Group or Fungimap forays.

Despite the myriad of folklore 'rules', there are NO rules of thumb to identify the edibility or toxicity of a species. Most poisonous fungi cannot be detoxified by cooking, drying, freezing, or other treatments. The only way to avoid poisoning is to avoid eating toxic species. In the event of a poisoning or suspected poisoning (as some species have delayed symptoms), contact the Poisons Information Centre on (emergency number)

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In order to accurately identify fungi, one must first be familiar with the major field characteristics of the various parts of a fungus fruiting body (i.e. features that are visible in the unaided eye). To most accurately identify a species, one must also be familiar with the microscopic features of the fungal spores (which are typically not visible to the unaided eye). The accompanying diagrams will help you recognize these morphological features.

Fungi identification

• A common problem (even for experts) is that one must know the species in the unaided eye, whereas you can only accurately identify fungi from the microscopic features of the spores. This is especially true when looking at fungal images online. The most accurate way to identify fungi is to use a microscope to view the microscopic structure of the fungal spores. This requires you to take the microscope images yourself or access a microscope to view the fungal spores.

Bible A poisonous fungi

Many people enjoy collecting edible and edible fungi but few have the knowledge about edibility of habitation fungi and deadly species are known to exist in Australia. Some common and dangerous species include: Amanita muscaria, Amanita phalloides, and Psilocybe cubensis. Amanita phalloides is a particularly dangerous species as it is rarely found in Australia, in the event of a poisoning is a hospitalization (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita muscaria contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita phalloides contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita phalloides contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita muscaria contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita phalloides contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid). Amanita muscaria contains a very poisonous substance (on a bright yellow liquid).

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Therefore it's usually not possible to identify fungi from images alone. The most accurate way to identify fungi is to use a microscope to view the microscopic structure of the fungal spores. This requires you to take the microscope images yourself or access a microscope to view the fungal spores.

Fungi of the Southern Otway Region

Edible & poisonous fungi

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Acknowledgement


Selected Victorian Fungus Field Guides [available from Fungimap website]

• SOLT Southern Otways (2006).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2007).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2008).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2009).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2010).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2011).
• SOLT Southern Otways (2012).

Web sites of interest

• Australian Fungi blog - http://australianfungi.blogspot.com/
• Australian Fungi blog - http://australianfungi.blogspot.com/
• Australian Fungi blog - http://australianfungi.blogspot.com/
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REFERENCES

Bulbous Chokelot

### Fungal Nutrition

Fungi can be divided into three categories based on how they obtain nutrition:

1. **Saprotrophs** are decomposers. They break down dead organic matter such as soil, leaf litter, living or dead wood, animal scats, and other fungi. They can break down lignin, cellulose, and chitin and are found on rotting logs, leaf litter, and other organic material.

2. **Mycorrhizal** fungi are associated with certain habitats or plant species. They form mutualistic relationships with the rootlets of plants. Mycorrhizal fungi support plant growth by improving nutrient uptake and increasing water absorption.

3. **Parasitic** fungi cause disease or disease-like conditions. They obtain nutrition at the expense of their host without providing any benefit. You’ll find them on living plants and other living organisms.

### Fungal Habitats

Fungi are incredibly diverse in their habitat preferences, ranging from tropical rainforests to polar deserts. Some common habitats include soil, leaf litter, living or dead wood, animal scats, and other fungi. Fungi will grow on almost any organic material, but their growth is influenced by factors such as temperature, humidity, and nutrient availability.

### Slime Moulds

Another unusual group is the **Myxomycota** or slime moulds. Slime moulds are not fungi but occupy a kingdom of their own, the Protista. Slime moulds are a colour code: soil (mycorrhizal), wood (parasitic), and obtain nutrition from other living organisms, such as soil, leaf litter, and animal scats. Slime moulds are included in this guide as they’ve historically been adopted by mycologists, but they are not fungi.

### Fungimap

The Fungimap project is mapping 115 target species that are easily recognised in Otway habitats and often arouse interest due to their bright colours. These images in this guide that are target species are indicated by an asterisk (*). You may like to contribute your records of target species to the Fungimap project - for record sheets and further information see the Fungimap website.