



While descending to the coast along Brozie Road you get glimpses along South Beach towards Hamelin Bay

Fungi form their own Kingdom and are second only to insects in numbers of species. They live mysterious secluded lives. For most of their existence, fungi persist in the form of microscopic thread-like filaments called hyphae. Hyphae colonise the soil or other substrates such as litter or wood, and at certain times of the year they show themselves briefly when they develop familiar and sometimes spectacular

reproductive structures in the form of mushrooms, corals and puffballs on the ground or in litter or as soft or woody hoof-shaped brackets on trees. Most fungi fruit in autumn or winter, but a few fruit in the spring.

Fungi are arguably one of the most important components of the forest environment as they play crucial roles in ecosystem function. Some are the forest recyclers, decomposing debris like leaves and dead wood, returning nutrients back to the soil. Others form intimate associations with the fine roots of plants when their microscopic fungal threads invade the cells of root tips and form mycorrhiza, which literally means 'fungus-root'. The relationship is beneficial to both plant and fungus. The fungus extracts nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from the soil and transfers them to the plant and in return the fungus receives sugars and other products that plants produce during photosynthesis. Some truffle-like fungi fruit underground and form a major food source for a number of native mammals such as woylies, bush rats and Gilbert's potoroo. Most truffle-like fungi are also mycorrhizal as are a number of decomposer fungi. Some native pathogenic fungi, like the Australian honey fungus (*Armillaria luteobubalina*), are capable of infecting and killing native trees and plants. In native forests they are not generally destructive but are a vital part of the ecosystem. They occasionally kill large trees, which then become colonised by wood decay fungi that help create the nesting hollows needed for many birds and mammals.

**Key to Plate:**

- 1 *Coprinus comatus*, Lawyers Wig, Shaggy Ink Cap
- 2 *Laccaria lateritia*
- 3 *Suillus luteus*, Slippery Jack
- 4 *Inocybe* sp.
- 5 *Ramaria capitata*, Apricot Coral Fungus
- 6 *Crepidotus nephrodes*
- 7 *Ramaria* sp., a coral fungus
- 8 *Rickenella fibula*
- 9 *Amanita ananiceps*, White-veiled Amanita, Karri Amanita
- 10 *Hygrocybe polychroma*, a waxcap
- 11 *Boletellus obscurecoccineus*, Rhubarb Bolete
- 12 *Bolbitius tütubans*, Egg-yolk Fungus
- 13 *Leucoagaricus* sp.
- 14 *Austropaxillus infundibuliformis* (pale form), Funnel Pax
- 15 *Pisolithus arhizus*, Horse-dropping Fungus
- 16 Unknown wood-rotting polypore

