

## Matchmaker: Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest

Below are written descriptions and images of fruiting bodies, mushrooms, of the fungal species in this ectomycorrhizal association. The information is from the web version of the Matchmaker: Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest (MMPNW) created by the Canadian Forest Service and based on the Windows MMPNW version 1.3 by Ian and Eli Gibson.

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**LATIN NAME(S)** *Agrocybe praecox* (Fr.) Fayod in Annales des Sciences Naturelles. Series 7 & 9: 358. 1889.

**ENGLISH NAME(S)** spring Agrocybe

**NOTES** features include creamy to brownish or yellow brown cap that is smooth to cracked, pallid to light brown gills, whitish to brownish equal stem, thin membranous ring, farinaceous odor and taste, dark brown spore deposit, and growth in spring to early fall

**CAP** 2-6(8)cm, rarely up to 14cm, convex becoming flat or retaining obtuse central umbo, margin incurved at first; ivory to cream, often pale ochraceous to pale buff toward center, ivory or pale cream when dry; smooth or lightly wrinkled or even cracking especially on drying, at first with a few white floccules of veil, (Watling), 3-10cm, convex to broadly umbonate; pale cream to buff or clay; dry, smooth, sometimes cracking when dry, (Phillips), 3-9cm, obtuse to convex becoming flat, or sometimes with a low broad umbo; cream to light brown at first then yellowish brown when old; bald, soft to touch, sometimes areolate (mud-cracked), (PNW keys), margin sometimes hung with a few whitish veil remnants, (Breitenbach)

**FLESH** white in cap, grayish straw or buff in stem, (Watling), thin; white, (Phillips, PNW keys)

**GILLS** adnexed or adnate, with slight tooth, broad, crowded, whitish to pale clay buff at first but soon umber or snuff brown, edges white; edges floccose, (Watling), adnate; pale brown to umber, (Phillips), adnate to adnexed, close, broad; pallid then light brown and finally dull dark brown, (PNW keys)



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**STEM** 4-11.9cm x 0.6-1.0cm, slender, equal or usually swollen toward base, stuffed; whitish throughout or tinged fawn or color of cap especially with age; mealy-striate at top, fibrillose streaky in lower part, frequently attached to white, thin mycelial cords, (Watling), 3-10cm x 0.4-1.0cm, equal; pale buff below ring, with white rhizomorphs at base, (Phillips), 3-10cm x 0.4-1.2cm, equal; white to pallid becoming brownish, with white strands (rhizomorphs) at base, often pruinose at top, (PNW keys)

**VEIL** white membranous apical ring, drooping with age, (Watling), ring membranous, high, often torn; white, (Phillips), submembranous often as patches (appendiculate) on edge of cap margin, disappearing with age, (PNW keys)

**ODOR** pleasant (Watling), farinaceous-mealy (Phillips), farinaceous (PNW keys)

**TASTE** mealy (Watling), farinaceous (Phillips, PNW keys)

**EDIBILITY** no (Phillips), yes but taste often poor and variants have unknown edibility, (Arora)

**HABITAT** on the ground in grassy or bare places, margins of fields and woods, spring and summer, often cespitose (tufted) or in small troops, (Watling for Britain), in wood chips, humus, and grass, in fields and woodlands, May to July, (Phillips), tufted to gregarious or scattered, on humus, chip dirt, lawns, fields, roadsides, open woods, spring or early fall, (PNW keys)

**SPORE DEPOSIT** snuff brown (Watling), dark brown (Phillips)

**MICROSCOPIC** spores 8.5-10 x 5-6 microns, elliptic in face view, slight flattened on one side in side view, fulvous in water, hazel in alkali, germ pore large, (Watling); prominent basidia 4-spored, 25-30 x 6-7.5 microns, cylindric; pleurocystidia sparse, 45-65 x 15-20 microns, lageniform to fusiform, inflated below, head sometimes ampullaceous, cheilocystidia 20-30 x 10-15 microns, vesiculose to ventricose, colorless; cap cuticle a hymeniform layer of subglobose, vesiculose to pyriform cells 35-50 x 15-25 microns, stem cuticle of parallel hyphae supporting vesiculose to lageniform cystidia at stem apex; veil of filamentous cylindric hyphae; clamp connections present, (Watling), spores 8-11 x 5-6 microns, truncate, (Phillips), spores 8-11 x 5-7 microns, elliptic, smooth, truncate with apical germ pore; pleurocystidia present 38-50 x 10-18 microns, utriform, cheilocystidia similar, (PNW keys)

**NAME ORIGIN** means "early"

**SIMILAR** like *dura* which has more robust fruiting bodies, only a hint of a ring zone but distinct veil remnants on cap margin, and longer spores, "A. *dura* is easy to confuse with *Agrocybe praecox*,... especially when the latter has a pale, areolate pileus. The two species can be definitely separated only microscopically, since A. *dura* always has spores distinctly > 10 microns long and cystidia which are vesicular to broadly lageniform. Macroscopically the two species can be separated by the fact that A. *dura* never has a pronounced membranous annulus but only a +/- well-defined annular zone with the veil remnants remaining attached to the pileal margin especially when young. In any case, an areolate cuticle is not a useful differentiating feature", (Breitenbach)

**SOURCES** Watling, Phillips\*, PNW keys, Lincoff(2)\*, Schalkwijk-Barendsen\*, Courtecuisse\*, Bessette(2)\*, Arora\*

**FAMILY** Bolbitiaceae of Order Agaricales