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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Ben Woo

LATIN NAME(S) Cortinarius mutabilis Smith group Arora

ENGLISH NAME(S) purple-staining Cortinarius

NOTES subgenus Phlegmacium; group characterized by purple-staining gills and stem surface, flesh also staining purple but the reaction varying in brightness and duration; description here for group derived from Arora; mutabilis is common in the Pacific Northwest and several other species occur including purpurascens and porphyropus, and according to Smith in 1944 subpurpurascens, CHEMICAL REACTIONS Lugol's iodine or Melzer's reagent give wine red color on flesh of base of stem (Joseph Ammirati, pers. comm.)

CAP 4-10cm, convex becoming flat or wavy; at first violet or grayish-violet, but usually suffused when old with buff, ochre, or brown, especially toward the center (margin often remaining violet); smooth, viscid

FLESH thick; pallid or pale violet becoming dark purple when bruised or cut and then rubbed (sometimes staining slowly)

GILLS adnate or more often adnexed or notched, close; dull violet or grayish-lilac, becoming pale brownish as spores mature, staining deep lilac or purple when bruised

STEM 4-10cm x 1-2cm at top, swollen at base but without abrupt bulb, pallid to pale violet or colored like cap, staining deep lilac or purple when bruised

ODOR mild

TASTE not distinctive (Bessette for mutabilis)

EDIBILITY unknown

HABITAT scattered to gregarious or in small clumps on ground or very rotten wood under conifers especially at high elevations

SPORE DEPOSIT rusty-brown

MICROSCOPIC spores 7-9 x 4.5-5.5 microns, elliptic, rough

NAME ORIGIN means 'changeable'

SIMILAR like subpurpurascens which has purple-staining gills but not stem

SOURCES Arora, Bessette(1)*, Smith(12)

FAMILY Cortinariaceae of Order Agaricales