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) Lactarius pallescens Hesler & Smith North American Species of Lactarius p323. 1979

ENGLISH NAME(S) pale-capped violet-latex milk-cap

NOTES characterized by viscid cap with variable color (white to grayish yellow, brownish orange or light brown), unchanging white milk that stains flesh and gills lilac, viscid white stem, mild taste, spores with amyloid ornamentation a broken reticulum 0.5-1.0 microns high, cap cuticle an ixotrichodermium, and stem cuticle an ixocutis to ixolattice; var. palmeranus described from AK has spores lacking a reticulum or at most obscurely reticulate; pallescens var. pallescens found at least WA, OR, ID, CA, Switzerland, and reported from BC by Gamiet, CHEMICAL REACTIONS KOH stains the cap surface yellow (Methven)

CAP (3)4-10cm, flat-convex then flat-depressed, margin incurved; milk-white when young, slowly becoming "pale vinaceous-fawn" to "light vinaceous-fawn" (a grayish vinaceous tint), becoming grayer on aging, at times developing ochraceous to pale rusty stains on aging (especially around injured areas); very slimy-viscid and drying slowly, bald, shining when dry, azonate or faintly zoned at times, margin faintly downy, (Hesler), 3-10cm, broadly rounded to somewhat depressed centrally, edge incurved to decurved; whitish at first, becoming grayish to grayish brown or light brown or slightly lavender, when old with orange yellow stains; slimy to sticky, (Ammirati)

FLESH white, staining lilac and progressing to lilac-brown finally, (Hesler), white, exuding copious white milk when cut which stains tissue lilac then lilac-brown, (Ammirati), MILK copious, milk-white, drying vinaceous-buff and staining tissues lilaceous, (Hesler), copious white, stains tissue lilac then lilac brown, (Ammirati), white, unchanging, staining flesh and gills lilac

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GILLS adnate to adnate-decurrent, close becoming subdistant, moderately broad; milk-white stained lilac from milk, often ochraceous along edges when old, (Hesler), adnate or slightly decurrent, close to subdistant; white, staining lilac, with orange-yellow stains along edges when old, (Ammirati)

STEM 3-8cm x 0.9-1.7cm, widening evenly downwards; milk-white, slowly changing as in cap and often finally stained ochraceous to rusty brown around base on injured areas; slimy-viscid when fresh, shiny when dry, (Hesler), 2.5-12.5cm long, fairly thick; white, color changing like the cap; slimy to sticky then shiny when dry, (Ammirati)

VEIL none

ODOR slight (Hesler)

TASTE very slowly but distinctly slightly peppery, (Hesler)

EDIBILITY poisonous (Ammirati)

HABITAT on soil and humus or on moss in conifer forests, (Hesler), solitary, scattered or in small groups, on ground in soil, humus or moss, in conifer or mixed forests, (Ammirati)

SPORE DEPOSIT white to creamy (Hesler), pale orange in mass (Methven)

MICROSCOPIC spores 9-10.5 x 7-9 microns, elliptic, presumably amyloid ornamentation of short bands and ridges and some isolated warts forming a broken to partial reticulum, prominences 0.4-1.0 microns high, (Hesler); basidia 4-spored, 50-60 x 9-12 microns; pleurocystidia: macrocystidia 75-110 x 6-15 microns, fusoid-pointed, rarely subcylindric-acuminate, some with one or more constrictions toward apex, content granular to +/- banded as revived in KOH, cheilocystidia (37)50-75 x 6-11 microns, otherwise resembling pleurocystidia, (Hesler), spores (8.5)9-10.5 x 6.5-8(8.5) microns, elliptic, amyloid ornamentation a broken to partial reticulum 0.5-1.0 microns high; cap cuticle an ixotrichodermium arising from an interwoven layer of filamentous hyphae, often collapsing to an ixolattice, dextrinoid debris and incrustations present; stem cuticle and ixocutis to ixolattice, (Methven)

NAME ORIGIN means 'becoming pale'

SIMILAR like L. uvidus var. montanus which has darker colors, cap that is merely viscid not slimy when moist, stem that is dry, cap surface staining green in KOH, and microscopically according to Methven slightly larger spores (10-11 x 7.5-8.5 microns) a

SOURCES Hesler(4), Ammirati*, Ammirati(5), Gamiet(2) (accessed 23/7/01), Methven(2)

FAMILY Russulaceae of Order Russulales

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