

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) *Russula foetens* (Pers. ex Fr.) Fries *Epicr. Myc.* 359. 1838

NOTES member of *fragrantissima* group, like *fragrantissima* but with nauseating odor and different spores; included in PNW keys and Smith(15) gives a distribution including ID, WA, MI, Grund says that it is "generally one of the most common mushrooms in the region west of the Cascades in Washington", but did not find it himself, Lincoff(1) says not known in North America, Shaffer describes *R. fragrantissima* Romagnesi sensu Shaffer as "the common mushroom [in eastern North America] with large basidiocarps and strong odor usually called *Russula foetens* in the United States", Singer assigns to *R. foetens* var. *minor* the species of Peck, *R. foetentula* Peck, which Peck describes (from eastern North America) as differing from *R. foetens* Fr. in closer gills and reddish brown or burnt sienna color at the base of the stem, **CHEMICAL REACTIONS** interior of stem becoming reddish brown with alkali, (Rayner)

CAP 5-15cm, margin pressed to stem when young; dirty yellow brown, darker at center; viscid, radially veined, cap skin separable to 1/2 when dry, margin striate, (PNW keys); 5-15cm, spherical with slightly wrinkled and furrowed margin pressed to the stem when young, later almost flat-expanded, depressed in center, margin often sharp and lobate; dirty honey to mustard brown, usually browner at center; viscid, bald, shiny for a long time, finely radially venose fibrillose, peeling halfway when dry, striking gibbously wrinkled and furrowed at margin, (Pilat), 5-15cm, spherical at first; dull brownish ochreous to honey; glutinous at first, often with brownish flocci on drying, radially veined, margin strongly tuberculate pectinate, (Rayner)

FLESH firm; whitish to dirty yellow, (PNW keys), firm and quite hard, later easily broken or crushed; whitish or dirty yellowish, sometimes with dirty green or brownish tinge, (Pilat), whitish, that of inner regions of stem becoming reddish brown on exposure, (Rayner), whitish turning brownish when exposed to air, (Lincoff(1))

GILLS distant, narrow; dingy white to cream; beaded with drops, becoming spotted reddish brown, (PNW keys), dense, quite narrow, narrowing towards both ends; straw yellow, slowly browning when bruised; exuding amber yellow drops when young, later spotted with rust color on the quite thin edges, usually conspicuously transversely venose, (Pilat), distant, lanceolate, thickish; cream, often brown spotted, (Rayner)

STEM whitish, brownish toward base, (PNW keys), 5-8cm x 1.5-3.5cm, equal or wider in middle, at first hard and solid but soon spongy, then hollow; white or pale, usually brownish at base; at first finely floccose and non-shiny at top, often with droplets, (Pilat), 5-12cm x 1.5-4cm, equal to wider in middle, hollow, hard and rigid, but breaking easily; whitish to buff; variously furrowed to wrinkled, (Rayner)

VEIL none

ODOR strongly unpleasant oily, sweet and repulsive, (PNW keys), unpleasant smell of sweet oil, (Pilat), strongly oily or rancid, (Rayner)

TASTE sharply peppery, (PNW keys), usually with sharp stinging taste lasting for a long time, and repulsively sweet, this irritates the throat and causes vomiting, the old fruiting bodies sometimes have a quite mild taste, (Pilat), of gills very peppery, but of stem center sometimes almost mild, in addition bitter or oily, (Rayner)

EDIBILITY inedible, if eaten raw causes vomiting, if cooked may cause poisoning in more sensitive people, in Russia, it is "silaged" so that it loses its unpleasant taste and smell and the milk-fermented mushroom may then be used in cooking like any other edible mushroom, (Pilat)

HABITAT all kinds of woods, (PNW keys), in forests of all kinds but particularly in grassy places, (Pilat for Europe)

SPORE DEPOSIT pale cream, Crawshay B-D, (PNW keys), Crawshay B-D (Rayner)

MICROSCOPIC spores 8-10 x 7-9 microns, ornamentation Patterson type B-3, (PNW keys), spores 8-10 x 7-9 microns, round, with large isolated spines, which are only joined here and there, (Pilat), spores (7)8-10 x (6)7-8 microns, elliptic, warts 0.6-1.2 microns high, some catenulate, a few fine lines; pleurocystidia 45-66 x 6-8 microns, clavate, ventricose, or cylindric, apices rounded, acute, or appendiculate, at times mucronate, empty, cheilocystidia 30-45 x 3-6 microns, cylindric to clavate, apices rounded or mucronate, empty, (Hesler), spores 8-10 x 7-9 microns, nearly round, warts strong, conical, up to 1.5 microns high x .25 microns, isolated or up to 3 joined by connectives, (Rayner), spores 7.5-10 x 6-9 microns, oval, amyloid warts, (Lincoff(1))

NAME ORIGIN means "fetid-smelling", from Latin

SIMILAR like laurocerasi which is paler and somewhat less repulsive in odor (PNW keys), laurocerasi is slightly smaller, smells pleasantly of bitter almonds, and has larger spores 10-13 x 9-12 microns with pronounced ridged ornamentation, (Pilat, spore s

SOURCES Pilat, Hesler(7), Lincoff(1)*, Courtecuisse*, Rinaldi*, Shaffer(4) (regarding subfoetens), PNW keys, Smith(15)

FAMILY Russulaceae of Order Russulales