

WANTED

Sightings of rare fungi!



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How to identify and record information to help save Tea-tree Fingers.

Version 3 (Apr 2018)

***fungi*map**



About Tea-tree Fingers



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- *Hypocreopsis amplexans* (Tea-tree Fingers or TTF) is the only macrofungus listed under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. However, as yet, no action plan for this species' survival and recovery has been developed.
- Recent surveys by Fungimap and the local community suggest that it has disappeared from one of the three known locations on the Mornington Peninsula and Coastal Gippsland but the good news is that a new site has been found in the Upper Yarra Valley.
- We are asking local people to keep their eyes open for this threatened species and contact Fungimap if they find it. There are concerns that it may have become critically endangered, therefore we are keen to locate any surviving populations.
- This booklet is designed to help you recognise and record information about this rare fungus. If you have any questions, contact Fungimap Conservation (fungimapconservation@gmail.com).

Good luck fungi hunting. If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher.

Please help find Tea-tree Fingers

This booklet is designed to help you recognise and record information about this rare fungus. We hope to find out more about new populations which could be present on public or private areas of bushland. This species has been found in other vegetation including forests with southern beeches: *Lophozonia* and *Fuscospora* (previously *Nothofagus*) in New Zealand, New South Wales - and possibly Tasmania.

Get to know what Tea-Tree fingers looks like and keep your eyes open wherever you go!

Important:

- Please **do NOT collect** Tea-tree Fingers (*Hypocreopsis amplexans*) or host species. At this point, we have not learned enough about the biology to know if collecting is detrimental to populations.
- Please be aware that locations where it could be found may have high conservation value. In order to prevent the spread of weeds and pathogens, good hygiene is essential. Before carrying out any searches, please make sure to clean any equipment, including footwear. Ideally Phytoclean or methylated spirits should also be used to clean boots and equipment between any sites you visit.

Where does Tea-tree Fingers live?

Known Victorian populations have been found in long-unburnt heathy woodlands and Tea-tree thickets on the Mornington Peninsula, Coastal Gippsland and the Upper Yarra Valley.

Tea-tree Fingers only fruits on some of the available woody substrates, mainly standing dead wood (stags) and branches. These are usually about 5 cm diameter and about 1 m long.

Typically it favours wood that is dead but not yet lying on the ground.



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Take care moving through the bush. Be aware of this species' substrate requirements and avoid trampling dead wood onto the ground.

Which plants does it live with?

Hypocreopsis is mainly found on Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale* top right) but has also been found on the wood of:

- Silky Tea-tree or Heath Tea-tree (*Leptospermum myrsinoides* middle right)
- Tea-tree or 'Manuka' (*Leptospermum scoparium*)
- Scented Paper Bark (*Melaleuca squarrosa* bottom right)
- Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)
- Yarra Burgan (*Kunzea leptospermoides*)
- *Kunzea* sp.

It is important to note the plant species on which it has been found. Take photographs of fruit, flowers, leaves and bark or a small sample of the plant for identification, if you are not sure.



Who does it live with? - *other fungi!*

Hypocreopsis is unusual, because it lives on other species of fungi, probably as a parasite - either on the fruit body or the mycelium; possibly both. As yet we know very little about how *Hypocreopsis amplexans* lives, which is why your help is so important.

The organisms on which it lives are wood-rotting fungi. The main host is thought to be the species of *Hymenochaete* shown here, which emerge as flat patches on the under surface of fallen logs and branches.

It may also grow on species of *Cyclomyces*, *Hydnochaete*, *Phellinus*, and *Pseudochaete*.

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Identify Tea-tree Fingers

Found on dead and living branches of tea-tree, paperbark and banksia in long-unburnt coastal stands in Victoria, this firm-textured, brown, irregularly shaped species clasps dead branches with light brown, finger-like projections.

Hypocreopsis amplexans grows up to 60 mm in length in a raised mass edged with irregular lobes up to 10mm wide. The lobes are brown with tips of paler yellowish-brown. White, powdery areas are often found on older specimens.

Fresh looking fruit bodies have been found from April – October.

The fruit bodies are about the size of 50¢ coin (~2-5 cm) and the branches they were found on were ~3 cm in thick.



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Look-alikes

A word of caution! Some other organisms bear a resemblance to Tea-tree fingers. For example, it is thought that unconfirmed sightings of *Hypocreopsis* from Tasmanian may be a species of lichen.

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About Fungimap

Fungimap actively seeks records and images of fungi. We maintain the National Fungimap database - with over 120,000 records of fungi sightings, as well as information on photographs submitted. This is the first project to collect data for our Fungimap Conservation Database.

Fungimap Inc. is a national non-profit citizen-science organisation dedicated to raising the profile of Australia's incredible fungal diversity.

Spotted it? Let us know!



Survey Forms

We have drawn up threatened species survey forms and examples to show how they should be filled in. We would also welcome any extra information you can send us or if you would prefer to submit this type of information as a “chatty” email rather than forms.

Forms can be found on the Fungimap website:

<http://www.fungimap.org.au/> or email

fungimapconservation@gmail.com and we will send them to you.

They include:

Site sheet - information on the exact location, including GPS or GPX files and details on vegetation and habitat. A general location like a park or property, plus the likely habitats searched. Site sheets only need to be submitted once and only resubmitted if there are significant vegetation changes.

Repeated Search sheet - information for a series of sites regularly visited and details on the number of observers & the search time taken.

Found sheet - images and observations of any *Hypocreopsis amplexans* or *Hymenochaete* fruitbodies found.

Photo-monitor sheet - images and detailed information of fruit bodies & habitat over time.

Photo-monitoring

The fruit bodies of Tea-tree Fingers may persist for several seasons. Shown here is an image of a fruit body over a year old, the right hand portion of which appears to still be fertile - unlike the fruiting body below.



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We do not know enough about the fruit bodies and need to learn how long they remain fertile and are shedding spores - and for how long the spores remain viable.



Photo-monitor by taking photos every month or two from the same position during the growing season (~April – October). Please take several images of fruit bodies from different angles each time you monitor. Include a scale like a ruler in some of the pictures.

*Little is known about the
life cycle.*

Has it a mycelium stage?

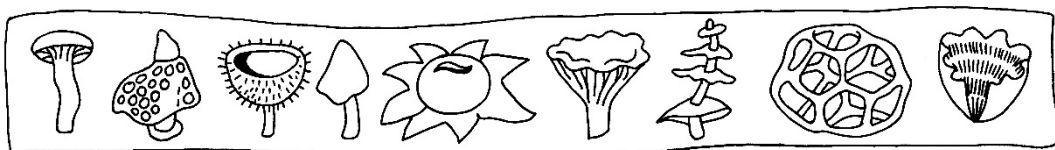
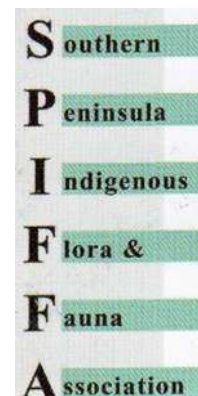
Is it self fertile?

Acknowledgements

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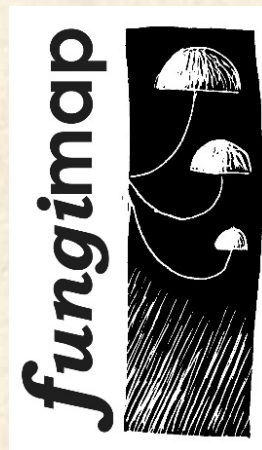
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- John Eichler, Maria Stevenson, Angela Little, Graham Patterson and Katrina Syme
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- La Trobe Valley Field Naturalists
- Parks Victoria - particularly the rangers at Mornington National Park
- Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association
- Victorian National Parks Association - particularly Mark Learmonth
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria - particularly Tom May and Val Stajsic



Contact Fungimap

Fungimap actively seeks records and images of fungi. We recommend you start with the more easily recognisable, distinctive recognisable species which are pictured in the online field guide found on our website, or in our published field guide *Fungi Down Under*.



Please send your records & images to Fungimap:
By email to fungimapconservation@gmail.com in small batches only, with no more than ~10 images, or 5 MB in size.

By post on a USB to Fungimap, Royal Botanic Gardens
Victoria, Private Bag 2000, South Yarra, 3141



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