

Fly Agaric—the Fairy Tale toadstool

David Medway, May 2008

The Fly Agaric - a conspicuous autumn toadstool

The Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) is the traditional “toadstool” of fairy-tale illustrations. It is one of the most conspicuous, beautiful and widely-known fungi. It is easily recognised when fresh by its large size and red cap speckled with white warts.

The Fly Agaric is native to the temperate region of the northern hemisphere. It was accidentally introduced to New Zealand where it is widely-distributed and very common. It grows on the ground in association with introduced conifers and deciduous trees in such habitats as parks and gardens, plantations and farm shelterbelts. In Pukekura Park and Brooklands, fruiting bodies of the Fly Agaric are most commonly found in April and May growing mostly under Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*) and English Oak (*Quercus robur*) trees. The number of fruiting bodies which appear may vary from year to year.

The Fly Agaric is an intoxicating and poisonous fungus that should not be eaten.



Pukekura Park Amanita muscaria photos: click on a photo to view a larger image, use Back button to return



Photos © Derek Hughes