

Colus pusillus



Colus pusillus © L.Kurth

Egg: white to dingy-white, gelatinous, smooth surface with dimples reflecting the net-like structure of the not-yet expanded arms within, diameter to 25 mm, white rhizomorphs at the base. Upon maturity, it splits into several short, irregular lobes. The egg remnants are seen as a whitish volva at the base of the mature fruiting body's stem.

Fruit body: A short stem that flares out into an open network of joined arms which make a cage-like structure; 100 mm high and 60 mm wide; with 3 – 10 arms, united at the base to form the stipe, vertical, joining to become an irregular network that forms a cage-like structure. Inner surface wrinkled across the width; outer surface is smoother or may have furrows running down its length; bright red or orange-red in colour. The arms are roughly triangular in cross-section – with the base of the triangle facing outward, and made up of a double layer of tubes – a large inner one and two small outer ones.

Stipe: Very short – sometimes rudimentary and still enclosed within the volva, made up of joined arms which become free to form the lattice above. Almost white turning to pale fleshy-pink or pale yellow – the colour is a lighter shade of the arms.

Gleba (Spore mass): olive-brown, thick and slimy, carried on the inner surface of the arms – particularly on the upper part of the receptacle.
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Flesh: cellular, spongy.

Smell: foetid, like rotting meat or sewage.

Spore print: olivaceous brown.

Spores: cylindric; 4 - 6 × 1.5 - 2.5 µm; smooth, yellowish or hyaline.

Substrate: on soil and in litter and wood chip mulch.

Habitat: in woods or in cultivated areas, or even well-manured house lawns. May be solitary or occur in small groups, year-round in tropical and subtropical areas

Material examined:

Notes: There may be some confusion between *Colus hirudinosus* and *Colus pusillus* as both species are of a similar size, structure and colouration and both are highly variable in appearance. The main distinction between the two is the tight mesh-like structure at the top of *C. hirudinosus* whilst *C. pusillus*'s net at the top is much larger and more open.