

## *Aseroe rubra*



*Aseroe rubra* © Susan Nelles

**Fruit body:** comprises a central erect tube and 5 - 11 radiating arms; 50 - 80 mm diameter; the pink to bright red (rarely white) arms are joined in pairs at their bases, with long tapering, divided tips.

**Stem:** central, hollow column, 25 - 90 mm tall; spongy, dry, and whitish-pink. It emerges from a white, membranous sac (volva). The fungus starts underground as a firm white jelly-like egg, which quickly ruptures producing the mature fruit body, leaving the remnant egg as the basal volva.

**Gleba (Spore mass):** at maturity, brown, stinking slime on the upper surface of the bases of the arms and central disc.

**Spores:** subcylindric;  $4.5 - 7 \times 1.7 - 2.5 \mu\text{m}$ , smooth.

**Substrate:** organically rich soil, litter and mulch.

**Habitat:** forests, gardens and parklands.

**Notes:** this medium fungus looks like a brightly coloured red starfish on a spongy pink stem. It often grows in groups in mulch. This was the first fungus to be described in Australia in 1792. Other reddish stinkhorns with arms include *Lysurus* species. A similar white fungus, *Aseroe arachnoidea*, has recently been discovered in North Queensland. It has arms that are solitary (not paired at the base).