

Lysurus mokusin (Cibot ex Pers.) Fr. 1823

Common Name: Lantern Stinkhorn

Description: Fruiting body consists of an angled or fluted stipe, topped by a number of short, vertical arms that are usually firmly joined at their tips to make a point. To 160 mm high and to 20 mm diameter. Colour white to pink, even reddish.

Egg: White, gelatinous texture, to 30 mm diameter, with white rhizomorphs at the base. The egg remnants are seen as a white-coloured volva at the base of the mature fruiting body's stem.

Stipe: Fluted with 4-6 angles, with conspicuous ribs between the angles that run the entire length of the stipe and continue up the arms. To 160 mm high and to 20 mm diameter, tapering towards the base. Colour may be white through fleshy-pink to reddish-pink. Hollow, fragile, dry and spongy.



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The stipe is very weak and tends to become arched rather than standing upright. There are conflicting descriptions of the stipe wall: may consist of a single row of thin-walled tubes, or it may be minutely chambered.

Arms: 4-6, corresponding to, and appearing to be an extension of, the number of ribs that run up the stipe. Up to 25 mm long, usually fused together at the tips to make a single, bare point, but may break apart with age or damage. They may be bowed outwards to form a “lantern-like” structure. Surface is finely wrinkled. Pink, orange or rose-red in colour. Interior composed of 1-3 thick-walled tubes.

Gleba: Light brown to olive-brown and darkening as it dries, thick and slimy, carried in the vertical spaces between the arms – leaving a bare strip down centre of the back of the arm that corresponds to the ribs of the stem. Smell is foetid, of rotting meat or sewerage.

Spores: 3.5-6 x 1.5-2.5 µm, cylindric, smooth, hyaline or tinted.

Habitat: Appears on forest litter, compost and wood-chip mulch on gardens, lawns, and even on hard-packed soil, where it may be solitary or occur in small groups.

Notes: Cunningham thought that this species was probably introduced into Australia and Dring thinks that it may have also been introduced into North America.

Pat Leonard has reported that the Blue-tongued Lizards in his garden not only eat the flies that are attracted to the *L. mokusin* he's found there, but may also eat the fungus.