

Auricularia cornea



Auricularia cornea © Fran Guard.

Macrocharacters: fruit bodies tough cartilaginous, gelatinous; mouse grey to olive brown; substipitate; up to 100 mm diameter by 1–2 mm thick; pileus pilose, densely covered with hyaline hairs, some in tufts; hymenium smooth; growing in gregarious or caespitose groups, occasionally solitary.

Microscopic characters: pileus made up of densely compacted gelatinised hyphae with cuticular hairs up to 450 μm long, on average $185\text{--}200 \times 5\text{--}7 \mu\text{m}$, with rounded tips; basidia $45\text{--}55 \times 4\text{--}5 \mu\text{m}$, cylindrical, with 3 transverse septa; spores allantoid, $14\text{--}16 \times 5\text{--}6 \mu\text{m}$.

Collections examined: AQ794460, Bunya Mountains National Park, QMS foray, Apr 2007.

Notes: known as the ‘hairy wood ear’ or ‘cloud ear’, this fungus is recognised by its mouse grey to olivaceous brown colour, smooth lower surface and densely hairy greyish cap. This fungus is also edible, though tasteless, and was collected for use in Chinese cookery and exported to China in the 19th century.