

Auricularia auricula-judae



Auricularia auricula-judae © Fran Guard

Macrocharacters: fruit bodies tough gelatinous; yellow to reddish brown; sessile to substipitate; up to 120 mm diameter by 1 - 2 mm thick; pileus minutely tomentose with hyaline hairs; hymenium smooth; growing in gregarious or caespitose groups, occasionally solitary.

Microscopic characters: pileus made up of densely compacted gelatinised hyphae with cuticular hairs $85 - 100 \times 5 - 6 \mu\text{m}$, with rounded tips; basidia $50 - 60 \times 5 - 6 \mu\text{m}$, cylindrical, with transverse septa; spores allantoid, $13 - 15 \times 5 - 6 \mu\text{m}$.

Notes: known as 'Jews ear' or 'Wood ear' (in North America) this fungus is recognised by its reddish brown colour, smooth lower surface and minutely hairy cap. This fungus is edible if tasteless and was collected for use in Chinese cookery and medicine, indeed it was exported from Queensland to China in the 19th century.