

Astraeus hygrometricus



Astraeus hygrometricus © Fran Guard

Fruiting body: sub globose or depressed at first, often encrusted in debris, 25 - 30 mm diameter; opening to reveal 7 to 13 rays which are strongly hygrometric and close over the endoperidium in dry conditions, opening and reflexing downward in damp weather, up to 80 mm in diameter when open.

Exoperidium: brown, layered, when older split into a reticulate pattern (tasselated) to expose paler flesh in lower layer.

Endoperidium: subglobose, felty, whitish at first becoming pale buff.

Stipe: absent, sessile.

Stoma: naked, ragged

Flesh: thick and leathery, almost woody when dry.

Spores: globose; 9 - 11 μm ; echinulate or verrucose, verrucae pointed and 0.5 - 1 μm high.

Habitat: nutrient poor soils under exotic trees.

Notes: this earthstar has been introduced with exotic trees; it is readily recognised by its hygrometric character hence its alternative name of the 'barometric earthstar'.

Collections examined: PL 19509, Mt Toomah Botanic Garden, NSW, Pat Leonard, May 2009; F2015061, suburban garden, Toowoomba, Fran Guard, 23 Jul 2015.