

Colus pusillus (Berk.) Reichert, 1940

Description: A short stem that flares out into an open network of joined arms which make a cage-like structure. To 100 mm high and 60 mm wide.

Egg: White to dingy-white, gelatinous, smooth surface with dimples reflecting the net-like structure of the not-yet expanded arms within, diameter to 25 mm, white rhizomorphs at the base. Upon maturity, it splits into several short, irregular lobes. The egg remnants are seen as a whitish volva at the base of the mature fruiting body's stem.

Stipe: Very short – sometimes rudimentary and still enclosed within the volva, made up of joined arms which ramify to form the lattice above. Almost white turning to pale fleshy-pink or pale yellow – the colour is a lighter shade of the arms.



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Arms: 3-10, united at the base to form the stipe, vertical, joining to become an irregular network that forms a cage-like structure. Inner surface wrinkled across the width; outer surface is smoother or may have furrows running down its length; bright red or orange-red in colour. The arms are roughly triangular in cross-section – with the base of the triangle facing outward, and made up of a double layer of tubes – a large inner one and two small outer ones.

Gleba: Olive-brown, thick and slimy, carried on the inner surface of the arms – particularly on the upper part of the receptacle. Odour unpleasant, intensely foetid, of rotting meat or sewerage.

Spores: 4-6 x 1.5-2.5 μm , cylindric, smooth, yellowish or hyaline.

Habitat: Appears on deep forest litter, in woods or in cultivated areas, rich compost or even well-manured house lawns. May be solitary or occur in small groups, year-round in tropical and subtropical areas.

Notes: There may be some confusion between *Colus hirudinosus* and *Colus pusillus* as both species are of a similar size, structure and colouration and both are highly variable in appearance. The main distinction between the two is the tight mesh-like structure at the top of *C. hirudinosus*; *C. pusillus*'s net at the top is much larger and more open.