

Ileodictyon gracile Berk., 1845

Description: A white, open-lattice ball, diameter to 200 mm, often detaching from the volva upon full maturity.

Egg: Dingy white, diameter to 30 mm, with white rhizomorphs at the base. The egg remnants are seen as a whitish volva at the base, however, the receptacle often detaches from this and may be carried by the wind for some distance from its place of origin.

Stipe: None.

Arms: The arms are joined to create a net or mesh that forms a cage-like structure. If there are a lot of arms, there may be up to 30 fairly regular polygonal-shaped spaces in the net.



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The arms may join so symmetrically that, if the receptacle detaches from the volva, it is not possible to tell the top from the bottom. However, fewer arms mean fewer spaces and those spaces will be more uneven in size and more angular in shape. The join area of the arms may be broader than the arms themselves. Some joins look triangular in shape and others rectangular, depending on how many arms meet at that place.

White, even and ribbon-like, 2-5 mm wide and flattened in cross-section. The interior surface may be smooth or have fine wrinkles across the width; the outer surface is typically smooth and may have a central groove running down the length. May have a smooth or fringed edge. Internally, the arms consist of 1-4 thick-walled tubes.

Gleba: Olive-brown or sage-green, thick and slimy, carried on the entire inner surface of the arms. Odour described as foetid, of rotting meat or faeces, and “faint, smelling of cheese”.

Spores: 3.5-6 x 1.5-3.1 μm , elongate/cylindric, smooth, hyaline or very pale brown.

Habitat: Appears on forest litter, compost, woodchip mulch or even house lawns, where it may be solitary or occur in small groups. Fruits year-round in tropical and subtropical areas.

Notes: This species has often been confused with *Ileodictyon cibarium*. It is of similar size, shape and colour, but it differs by having much narrower, mostly smooth arms which become noticeably broader at their junction and which are quite flattened in cross-section.

Dring 1980: “According to the observations of Dr R. Hilton, Perth, Western Australia (personal communication) the eggs of this species open explosively and the half-inflated receptacle jumps out of the volva.” *Contributions towards a Rational Arrangement of the Clathraceae* Kew Bulletin, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 58.

Tony Young: “One Qld account detailed a mass eruption of this species on a house lawn,

where the maturing eggs were visible through the grass and from which the lattices began to emerge “explosively” all over the lawn to produce a spectacular display of upwards of 50 lattice-work balls.” *A Field Guide to the Fungi of Australia*, p. 197.

M. Kuo: “One of Australia's more common stinkhorns, *Ileodictyon gracile* looks like a graceful, white cage. Unlike many similar mushrooms, it often detaches itself from its base ... which makes me wonder whether it rolls around like a tiny, stinky tumbleweed in Australian subdivisions.” *MushroomExpert.Com*