

The Lost and Found Fungi project

Five species of conservation concern associated with old and ancient trees and their habitats

The following five species of fungi are of current conservation concern in Britain, associated with old long-established oak or beech woodlands, historical deer parks, or traditionally managed orchards and old apple trees.

[The Lost and Found Fungi project](#), co-ordinated at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and running from July 2014 to July 2019, is trying to establish a baseline distribution for these species to aid in their conservation, with the aid of volunteers. Together, we hope to discover new sites, undertake surveillance of known sites, and rediscover populations at historically known sites. By doing this, we aim to formally Red List assess these species towards the latter part of the project, and to establish a baseline distribution for these species in Britain to help conserve populations and assess decline in the future.

If anyone happens to have any records of these species, sees any of these species fruiting, or wishes to undertake surveillance of any populations in their area, please get in touch with Dr. Brian Douglas at b.douglas@kew.org.

Online resources and distribution maps can be found at the Lost and Found Fungi project website at <http://fungi.myspecies.info/content/lost-found-fungi-project>. We also run [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts to help promote the project and help publicise recent finds.



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[Oak polypore Buglossoporus \(=Piptoporus\) quercinus](#)

About: Oak polypore is a bracket fungus growing from the exposed heartwood of living ancient oak trees, or on their standing or fallen remains.

How to identify: Brackets up to 15 cm across and 1-5 cm thick with a yellow to brown top and whitish underside, growing on exposed heartwood of veteran oak trees. Mature fruiting bodies are distinctive but young fruit bodies can sometimes look similar to young stages of other bracket fungi, notably young chicken of the woods *Laetiporus sulphureus*. The major potential lookalikes are listed [here](#).

When to look: June to October, with peak records from July and August.

Where to look: In areas with large numbers of ancient or veteran oak trees, particularly old deer parks and forest pastures. It is found more frequently in southern England.

Conservation status: **ILLEGAL TO PICK OR DAMAGE!** One of only four non-lichen fungi legally protected against picking or destruction. It is listed as a priority species in England, Wales and Scotland. Assessed as **Vulnerable** in the unofficial British Red List ([Smith et al. 2016](#)), and provisionally globally assessed as **Vulnerable** due to a small global population and habitat decline. It is widely distributed across England with a few sites known in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but known colonised trees are relatively few (~281) with only an estimated 1-3 individuals present within each tree. It is dependent on the continuity of ancient or veteran oaks (a vulnerable habitat) and mature oak woodland for long-term persistence.



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Bearded tooth – *Hericium erinaceus*

About: A large whitish toothed fungus usually found in ancient beech woodlands.

How to identify: Whitish fruiting bodies up to the size of a football, formed of downward-pointing spines. Almost always on beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) or rarely Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) trees.

When to look: September to November, peak records in October.

Where to look: Often high up on beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) or oak (*Quercus* sp.) trees, typically mature or veteran trees, and where collapsing trees and large limbs are kept on site. Usually found in southern and south east England. Fruiting bodies can continue fruiting on colonised trees for many years.

Conservation status: **ILLEGAL TO PICK OR DESTROY!** One of only four non-lichen fungi legally protected against picking. It is listed as a priority species in England and Wales and as **Vulnerable** in the unofficial British red list ([Smith et al. 2016](#)).



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Coral tooth – *Hericium coralloides*

About: A beautiful and delicate coral-like fungus fruiting from logs and stumps, usually found in ancient beech woodlands.

How to identify: White, branched, coral-like fruiting bodies with downward pointing spines, up to 25cm across. Found on Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and occasionally ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) or elm (*Ulmus*) wood.

When to look: August to December.

Where to look: On the fallen trunks or logs of beech trees, mainly in southern England. Fruit bodies may regrow annually but rarely for more than five years in a row.

Conservation status: **PLEASE DO NOT PICK OR DAMAGE!** *Hericium coralloides* is listed as a priority species in England and is assessed as **Endangered** in the unofficial British red list ([Smith et al. 2016](#)). In Britain, it is far less commonly found than its legally protected close relative *Hericium erinaceus*.



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Zoned Rosette – *Podoscypha multizonata*

About: A fungus forming distinctive large reddish to pinkish brown rosettes. Widely distributed but infrequently recorded in southern England. The British population comprises a substantial percentage of known sites globally, and so requires some degree of surveillance to ensure the long-term survival and health of the British population.

How to identify: Large reddish to pinkish brown rosettes up to 20 cm across, usually fruiting near the base of beech or oak trees.

When to look: July to November, with occasional records in January and April. Peak records in October.

Where to look: In parks and woodlands where there are beech and oak trees. It appears to be more common in southern and south-east England.

Conservation status: Listed as a priority species in England. Its known population was too large to assign a threatened category in the unofficial British Red List ([Evans et al. 2006](#)). Although this species may not seem to be notably rare where it occurs, zoned rosette is typically associated with old, ancient, and veteran trees, a habitat that has declined in Britain and throughout Europe. Britain also contains a high proportion of the world's known sites for the zoned rosette, and so we have an international responsibility for this species.



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Orchard toothcrust – *Sarcodontia crocea*

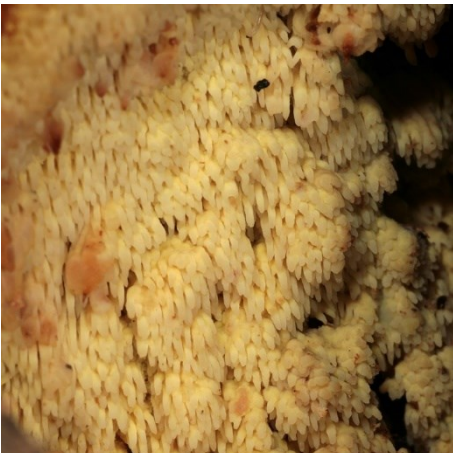
About: A bright yellow tooth fungus growing on old apple trees. It is threatened by the decline in traditionally managed orchards.

How to identify : The orchard toothcrust forms patches which range in size from a few centimetres to 1 square meter, covered with downward-pointing yellow-orange teeth, on old apple trees. Fruit bodies can often occur inside rot-holes or hollow trunks. It can have a strong fruity, pineapple, aniseed or fishy smell.

When to look: From July to November, peak records made in September.

Where to look : On old apple trees, particularly in traditionally managed orchards, but also on isolated trees in woods, gardens, and urban areas.

Conservation status: It is listed as a priority species in England, and assessed as **Vulnerable** in the unofficial British red list ([Evans et al. 2006](#)). It was historically widespread but very rarely recorded, and its range appears to have reduced post-1980 despite a subsequent increase of records and recording activity. This may be associated with the continuing decline of traditional orchards, which are a priority habitat for conservation in England.



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