



## *Hebeloma aminophilum* — ghoul fungus

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*Hebeloma aminophilum*, or ghoul fungus, is aptly named because it generally grows beside or near the remains of decaying animal carcasses. It's common in forests and woodlands throughout southern and eastern Australia and in the southwest is found fruiting in late autumn.

The mushrooms can be large, up to 11cm in diameter and 12cm tall, and can often occur in large numbers. Caps are dome-shaped at first becoming flat, pinkish-brown with a tan margin and sticky when fresh. Crowded, pink gills on the underside of the cap produce pinkish-brown spores. Stems are creamy white with long, brown fibrils pressed on the surface and a bulbous base.

A very similar form of the species, *Hebeloma aminophilum* f. *hygrosarax*, also occurs in the southwest but it's usually distinguished from the ghoul fungus because it's somewhat smaller and not associated with dead animal remains. The ghoul fungus will often fruit amongst the same bones each autumn for a number of consecutive years, but it can also fruit in the absence of any animal remains.

The Scientific name describes the shape of the mushroom and its preference for decomposed animal remains. *Hebe-*: blunt or obtuse, *amino-*: amino acid, *-phil-*: loving.