



Piptoporus australiensis — curry punk

Richard Robinson, Science Division, Manjimup, richard.robinson@dec.wa.gov.au



© Richard Robinson

In the southwest, *Piptoporus australiensis*, or curry punk, is common on karri trees, stumps and logs in late summer. On living trees it generally develops a bracket-like fruit body on the trunk, or near the base on fire scars. The colour, size and texture make it easy to recognise.

Brackets can grow up to 50cm or more wide and 20cm thick. When fresh it is bright orange, smooth or greasy on the upper surface with a layer of pores on the underside. The flesh is rubbery, but very juicy making the brackets quite heavy. Curry punk juice is a good dye and will stain your skin or clothing yellow.

Curry punk causes a brown cubical rot in the heartwood of trees that is readily visible in well-rotted logs. The brackets persist for some months, but rain tends to wash them out and they fade to a whitish colour as they age. When dry they have a distinctive curry odour, hence the common name of curry punk.

The scientific name describes the appearance, habit and distribution of the fungus. *Pipt-*: easily detachable, falling off, *por-*: pores (on the underside), *austral-*: southern, *ensis-*: indicates place of growth or origin.