



Calostoma fuscum — common prettymouth

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Calostoma fuscum belongs to a group of ornamented, stalked puffball fungi commonly referred to as 'pretty mouths'. *Calostoma fuscum* is not a common fungus in the southwest, and prefers to fruit in moist shady positions.

Spherical puffball-like structures, 10–12mm diameter, are supported on stems constructed of interwoven strands of tough gelatinised material. In young specimens, the apex of the puffball is protected by a scull-cap-like covering or lid that falls off at maturity to reveal the characteristic red ornamented pore through which its powdery spore mass is released.

Other species of *Calostoma* are more common on sandy soils in woodland or coastal heath, and may have different coloured pores or 'mouths' on the apex of their caps.

The scientific name refers to the coloured ornamented pore at the top of the fungus: *Calo-*: beautiful, *stom-*: mouth, *fusc-*: fuscous (dark coloured).