

The genus *Boletus* and allies

The Boletes form a large group of fungi with pores (like a sponge) underneath the cap instead of gills. Originally one genus (*Boletus*) they are now split into several genera. These woodland fungi form mutually beneficial relationships with many different trees. Here and on the next sheet are some key features of the four main genera.

Boletus

Boletus edulis (Penny bun, Cep or Porcini)



Photo credit: Nick Standing

Boletus caps are firm-fleshed and rarely cracked. The pores have hundreds of tiny tubes underneath; when pulled apart each tube tends to remain intact.

Xerocomoid group

Xerocomus subtomentosus (Suede Bolete)



Photo credit: Nick Standing

Xerocomus and ***Xerocomellus*** caps are soft-fleshed and often cracked. The pores have hundreds of tiny tubes underneath; when pulled apart each tube tends to split in half.

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Leccinum

Leccinum variicolor (Mottled Bolete)



Photo credit: Nick Standing

Leccinum stems differ from other Boletes in having obvious dark scales (known as scabers) all over the surface, contrasting with the pale background colour. They are common under Birch trees.

Suillus

Suillus luteus (Slippery Jack)



Photo credit: Nick Standing

Suillus caps differ from other Boletes in being sticky to the touch, and in wet weather they become really glutinous and slimy. They are only found under Conifers.



The genus *Clitocybe*

There are over 30 species of this genus in the UK, commonly known as the Funnels owing to their characteristic shape – though confusingly some species are not obviously this shape!

They are mostly found in woodland litter but some species grow in grassland. A few are good to eat but a few are deadly poisonous and separating the different species is often very difficult as many of them look very similar.

Caps are smooth and range in size from 3cm to over 10cm across according to species; most are basically cream in colour, a few are white, some are darker brown or grey, and one is distinctly blue!

Gills and spores are white to cream and in many species the gills slope down the stem like a wine goblet or funnel. Stems are usually white to pale cream and lack a ring.

Most species smell sweetish, several smell of aniseed, one of crushed tomato leaves and one even of wet feathers or hen houses!



Clitocybe geotropa

Photo credit: Neil Fletcher



Clitocybe odora

Photo credit: Penny Cullington

The genus *Cortinarius*

There are literally hundreds of species of this genus in the UK, many remain unnamed. They are commonly known as the Webcaps owing to their characteristic fine 'cortina' – a web-like veil which covers the young gills then disperses usually leaving rusty remnants on the stem. The cortina together with its typical rusty gills when mature make this genus easy to recognise but at species level only a few can be named with certainty.

They occur mostly in Autumn growing under many different types of trees with which they have a mutually beneficial relationship. All are probably poisonous and one is known to be deadly. This very variable genus is somewhat challenging to identify.

Caps range in size from 1cm to over 10cm across; texture and colour vary considerably according to species. Gill colour varies but may start out violet and ends up bright rusty brown like the spores.



Cortinarius cisticola

Photo credit: Nick Standing



Cortinarius epsomiensis

Photo credit: Penny Cullington

The genus *Tricholoma*

There are over 40 distinct species of this genus in the UK and its common English name is Knight.

Some species are rare, some are common, and as with many other genera a few are considered good to eat but some are poisonous.

They occur in Autumn growing under many different types of tree with which they have a mutually beneficial relationship.

Caps range in size from about 4cm to about 8cm across according to species; colours are mostly quite dull, from white to cream, some shade of brown or grey, a few are greenish or yellow; some species have smooth caps, others are roughened or even scaly, some are sticky and some are dry. The fruit bodies are often as broad as they are tall.

Gills and spores are whitish, sometimes gills are spotted with brown. Stems are usually white or a paler shade of the cap colour; just one species has a stem with a ring.

Several species smell 'mealy', i.e. of flour or bread. The yellow species shown on the right here has a very unpleasant smell of coal gas tar!



Tricholoma sculpturatum

Photo credit: Penny Cullington



Tricholoma sulphureum

Photo credit: Nick Standing