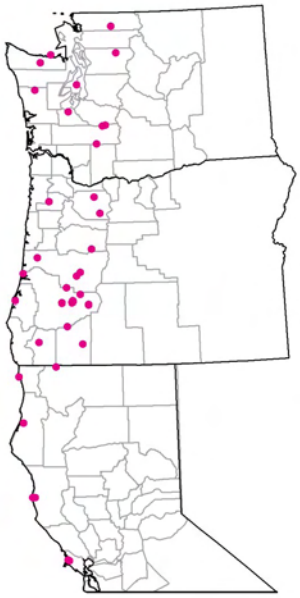
Sparassis crispa Wulfen:Fries



ROD name *Sparassis crispa*

Family Sparassidaceae **Morphological Habit** cauliflower

Description: **Sporocarps** annual, arising from a perennial, elongated, hypogeous pseudosclerotium as a rounded mass of many anastomosing and subdivided, horizontal to vertical petaloid branches with thin, wavy margins, 100-300 mm in diam. x 100-200 mm tall, cream yellow to yellow-brown overall, base darker brown. **Pseudosclerotium** a mass of soil and humus held together by white mycelium, 200-700 x 50-100 mm, attached to roots of living or dead conifers, rarely lacking a pseudosclerotium and then attached to dead wood. **Odor** strong, somewhat disagreeable or like smoked bacon. **Basidia** 40-60 x 4-8 µm, clavate, 4 spored. **Cystidia** absent. **Clamp connections** present. **Spores** ellipsoid, 5-7 x 3-5 µm, smooth, hyaline, inamyloid, spore print white.

Distinguishing Features: Because of its large size, conspicuous morphology and esculent properties, *Sparassis crispa* is a well-known species and one that has been illustrated in nearly every North American field guide published to date. Many of these reports list the species as *S. radicata*. It is encountered nearly every season in the Pacific Northwest but usually is represented by a single sporocarp; the species is widespread but locally rare. *Sparassis crispa* is characterized by the large cauliflowerlike sporocarps with clustered, flattened, curly, cream to yellow-brown, erect branches arising from a long, buried "stem." It is the only species of *Sparassis* that occurs in the Pacific Northwest.

Distribution: Widespread in North America and Europe. **CALIFORNIA**, **Del Norte** Co., Crescent City; **Humboldt** Co., Wallace Appleton Property, Bayside; **Marin** Co., Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Inverness; Tomales Bay State Park; **Mendocino** Co., Jackson State Forest (JSF), Aleuria Glen; JSF, Jug Handle Creek Farm; **Siskiyou** Co., Rogue River National Forest, Red Buttes Wilderness, trail 954; **OREGON**, **Clackamas** Co., Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Cascades Resource Area, north fork of Eagle Creek; Mount Hood National Forest; **Coos** Co., Coos Bay, south of Coos Bay; **Douglas** Co., Umpqua National Forest (UNF), 1.6 km southeast of Cougar Bluffs; UNF, Lookout Mountain; UNF, near Emile Shelter; UNF, 0.8 km southwest of Reynolds Butte; BLM, 1.6 km west of Burnt Mountain; UNF, 2.4 km northwest of Dog Prairie; BLM, near Jim Creek; UNF, Threehorn Mountain; Lake Tahkenitch; **Jackson** Co., BLM, Butte Falls, 1.2 km southwest of Buck Point; **Josephine** Co., Siskiyou National Forest, Big Pine campground; **Lane** Co., UNF, 4.8 km southeast of June Mountain; Siuslaw National Forest, Indian Creek; Willamette National Forest (WNF), Lookout Point Reservoir; **Linn** Co., WNF, H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, 2.4 km northeast of Quentin Knob; **Yamhill** Co., BLM, Tillamook Resource Area, 0.8 km north of Stoney Mountain; **WASHINGTON**, **Clallam** Co., Olympic National Park (ONP), Elwa drainage, near Boulder Creek; ONP, Olympic Hot Springs; **Grays Harbor** Co., Olympic National Forest, Lake Quinault; **Kitsap** Co., Bremerton; **Lewis** Co., Quartz Creek, Big Tree area; **Pierce** Co., Mount Rainier National Park (MRNP), Longmire; MRNP, Lower Tahoma Creek; **Snohomish** Co., Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF), 3.2 km southwest of White Chuck Mountain; **Thurston** Co., Olympia; **Whatcom** Co., MBSNF, Noisy Creek trail near Baker Lake.

Substrate and Habitat: Solitary, typically within 2 m of the base of a living coniferous tree (*Pseudotsuga*, *Pinus*).

Season: Autumn.

References: Breitenbach, J.; Kränzlin, F. 1986. Fungi of Switzerland. Lucerne, Switzerland: Mycological Society of Lucerne. 412 p. Vol. 2. Miller, O.K., Jr. 1972. Mushrooms of North America. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. 360 p.

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