What to do if you find it:

Make an observation

The first thing to do is to **record your observation**. We prefer to use the iNaturalist app for that (visit www.iNaturalist.org to learn more), but you could also upload your observation to Mushroom Observer (visit www.MushroomObserver.org). The QR code to the right will take you to the Fungal Diversity Survey (FunDiS for short) website on how to "Contribute Observations" to the project:

fundis.org/observe/contribute-observations

The best thing you can do is take *lots* of photographs and notes. Typically, smartphones will automatically georeference any photos taken, but it is good practice to note your exact location, preferably with GPS coordinates, and what trees or other habitat features are nearby. For example, was the mushroom growing from duff and humus, or from bare soil? Did it have a particular smell?

Collect a specimen

If you are in an area where it is allowed and have any necessary permits, **we strongly urge you to create a vouchered collection**. This means a dried specimen for deposit in a herbarium, where researchers can access it for things like DNA sequencing. If you don't know how to do this, please see:

fundis.org/sequence/sequence/dry-your-specimens

In California, collecting mushrooms is usually allowed in National Forests **with a permit**. Permits can be obtained at the headquarters of the National Forest you're visiting, and are usually inexpensive or free. However, restrictions vary among the individual National Forests, so make sure to find out the specifics when picking up your permit. In Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, most State and Federal lands allow collecting up to a gallon per day without a permit, but again, regulations vary, so check ahead of time.

Don't forget to look for other mushrooms and fungi while you're there! Like other Rare Fungi, part of why this mushroom is rare is because it grows **in a place that mushroomer pickers don't generally go:** the oldest of Old Growth. Since you've already got iNaturalist open, why not record your other finds?

Most mushrooms are like fruit: picking an apple from an apple tree doesn't hurt the tree. In the same way, **harvesting mushrooms does not generally hurt the mycelium of the fungus**. We do still recommend leaving some mushrooms behind, and not picking perennial mushrooms, like brackets and conks.

Who to contact

If you think you've found this mushroom, and you're not sure about any of the above, such as how to report the find, whether you can collect it, or what to do with it once you have collected it, please contact us!

conservation@fundis.org

Habitat

Look for the deep, vibrant purple tones of this large coral mushroom deep in the old-growth forests of the Pacfic Northwest. It's only been found in a handful of sites, and what they all have in common is that they're **old-growth forest**. In California, it has been found in mixed conifer forests, presumably in mycorrhizal relationships with Red Fir (*Abies maginifica*) and White Fir (*Abies concolor*), as well as with Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*).

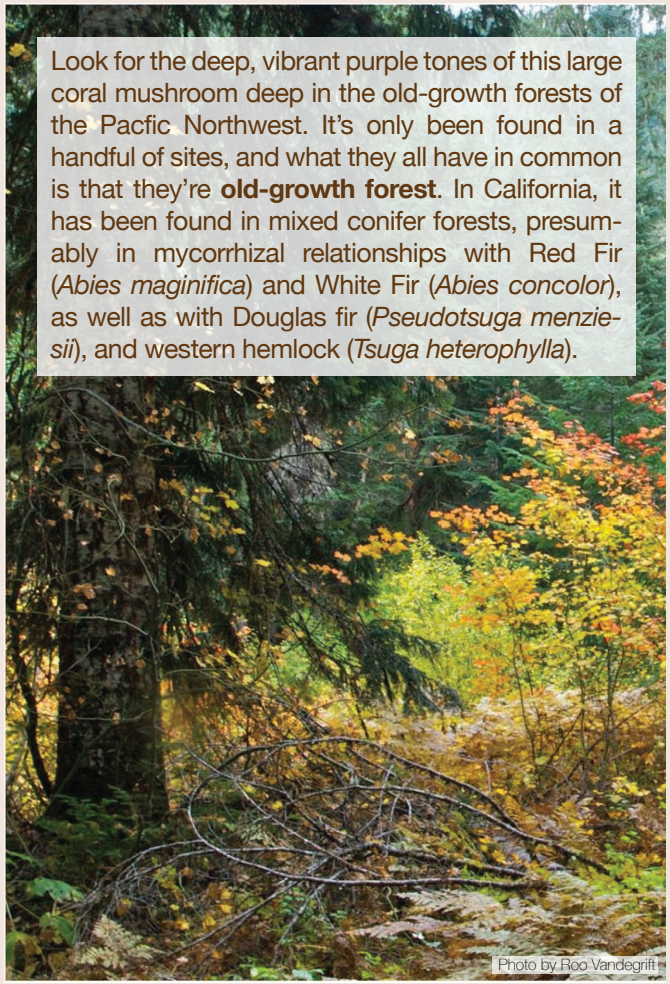

Photo by Roo Vandegrift

More information

Siegel N, Vellinga EC, Schwarz C, Castellano MA, Ikeda D. 2018. *A field guide to the rare fungi of California's National Forests. Bookmobile*: pg. 256–257. Accessible at:
mykoweb.com/CAF/PDF/Rare_Fungi_of_CA_National_Forests.pdf

Siegel N. 2019. *Ramaria purpurissima*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2019: e.T125433318A125433322.

Barnhart KS, Beug M. 2010. *Trial Field Key to species of RAMARIA in the Pacific Northwest*. Pacific Northwest Key Council (SVIMS). Accessed 15 Sept. 2020. URL:
svims.ca/council/Ramar1.htm

iNaturalist (2 obs.):
inaturalist.org/taxa/500156-Ramaria-purpurissima

Mushroom Observer (4 obs.):
mushroomobserver.org/name/show_name/28949

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The Purple Prince

Ramaria purpurissima

Photo by Noah Siegel

IUCN Red List: ***VULNERABLE***

This purple coral mushroom has only been found fruiting in old-growth forests with mature trees, where it can be found with Red and White fir, Western hemlock, and Douglas fir.

Have old-growth forests become **so rare** *that this species has not been found in Washington and northern Oregon?*

FUNGAL DIVERSITY SURVEY

This pamphlet prepared by:
Roo Vandegrift, Else C. Vellinga & Joanne Schwartz

Description

This purple coral mushroom forms large fruitbodies of around 6 inches high and wide, made up of small branches that are coming off a large basal stem. It is purple in all its parts, from its dark grape-purple branches to its pale lilac-tinged stems, except for the inner flesh, which is white. The stem gets rusty stains when it gets older.

It looks like a cross between a purple cauliflower and a coral.

What can it be confused with?

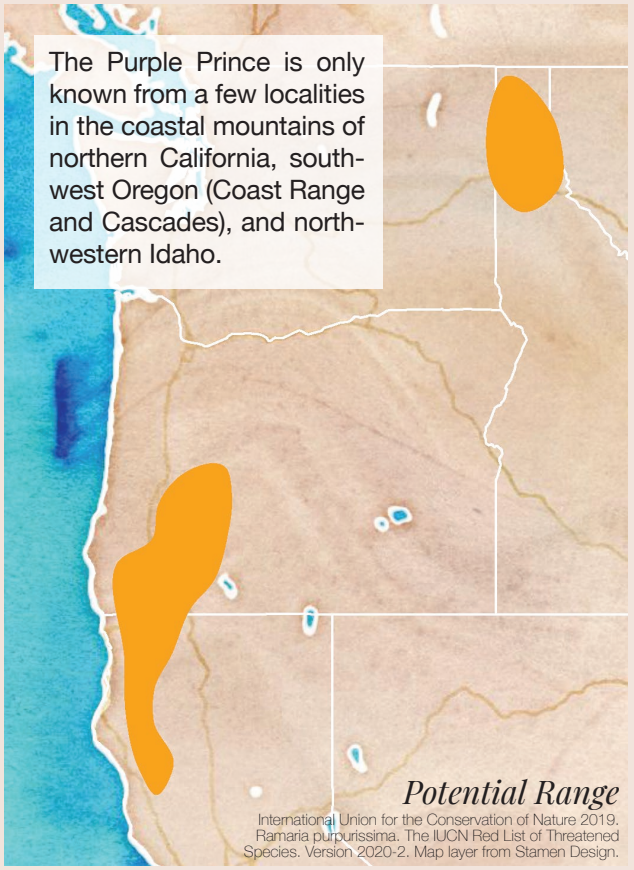
There are other purple coral-shaped mushrooms, but none as big and as branched as this one. *Ramaria fumosiavellanea* is small and only barely purple while the Smoky Finn (*Ramaria violaceibrunnea*) is also smaller, with longer branches and a slender stipe, and is only strongly purple when very young.

The combination of **large size**, **dense branching**, **purple surface color**, **white interior**, and **rusty stains on the stipe** is completely unique.

CAUTION: Never eat wild mushrooms without a confident identification! Contact Poison Control if you think you have eaten a poisonous mushroom: 1-800-222-1222

When & Where?

This striking coral fruits in fall and early winter. Records from Idaho start in September, with those from further south appearing from November or December onward.



The Purple Prince is only known from a few localities in the coastal mountains of northern California, southwest Oregon (Coast Range and Cascades), and northwestern Idaho.