

DON'T EAT *PAXILLUS INVOLUTUS*! - Bill Allaway

Paxillus involutus is widely regarded as poisonous or even deadly, some authors including gruesome details. This is even though Luigi Fenaroli's book categorises it as 'edible' (see translation below). The strong majority of books, including the highly authoritative "Wild Mushroom and Toadstool Poisoning" from Kew, say that *Paxillus involutus* is **POISONOUS AND NOT TO BE EATEN**. Here is a listing of various authors' statements on it.

Paxillus involutus

Poisonous if eaten raw or inadequately cooked. (Bon M. 1987. *The Mushrooms and Toadstools of Britain and North-western Europe*. London: Hodder and Stoughton).

Poisonous, sometimes deadly! (Courtecuisse R, Duhem B. 1995. *Mushrooms and Toadstools of Britain and Europe*. London: Harper Collins)

Edible mushroom of good quality (high value), not easily confused with other noxious species. It is also successfully used in the preparation of dried mushrooms. Some authors have signalled the potential toxicity if consumed in its raw state and they recommend eating them only after a cooking period of at least 25 minutes, even though this recurrence has never been reported in the Southern European countries. (Fenaroli L. 1998. *Funghi*. Firenze: Giunti)

.....poisonous.....Nature of toxin - Type III, gastrointestinal. This should be considered as dangerous, since deaths have been reported from it. The toxin is apparently most potent in raw specimens. Other authorities cite poisoning by this species from a gradually acquired allergic sensitivity that can one day suddenly lead to severe hemolysis, shock and acute kidney failure following a meal of *P. involutus*, resembling type Ib. (Haard R, Haard K. 1977. *Poisonous and Hallucinogenic Mushrooms, 2nd edition*. Seattle: Homestead Book Co.)

Although this species is eaten in some places, in other parts of its range it can have a decidedly acid-sour taste. There are reports that it can produce a gradually acquired hypersensitivity that causes kidney failure. (Lincoff GH. 1981. *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*. New York: Knopf).

Not recommended although tasty because it is now known to cause a gradually acquired hypersensitivity that can result in massive hemolysis and be life-threatening. (Lincoff GH, ed. 1981. *Simon and Schuster's Guide to Mushrooms*. New York: Simon and Schuster)

Good edible, but toxic in the raw state. It is recommended to blanch this mushroom in a very large volume of water for a long time and to throw away the strongly coloured cooking water. (Marchand A. 1973. *Champignons du Nord et du Midi, vol. 2*. Perpignan: Hachette.)

Poisonous. (McKnight KH, McKnight VB. 1987. *A Field Guide to Mushrooms*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin)

Although this very common mushroom is frequently eaten in eastern Europe, several cases of fatal poisoning have been attributed to it. Even with well-cooked specimens cases of poisoning have been recorded. No toxin has so far been isolated, but there is some evidence that repeated consumption may have a cumulative effect resulting in severe symptoms and death from a breakdown of the circulatory system. (Oldridge SG, Pegler DN, Spooner BM. 1989. *Wild Mushroom and Toadstool Poisoning*. Kew: Royal Botanic Gardens)

It is **slightly poisonous** and highly indigestible to some people when eaten raw, but is harmless, if inferior, when cooked. (Shepherd CJ, Totterdell CJ.1988. *Mushrooms and Toadstools of Australia*. Melbourne: Inkata Press).

Harmless if cooked, slightly poisonous if eaten raw; **best avoided**. (Young AM. 1982. *Common Australian Fungi*. Sydney: UNSW University Press).

In summary, again - don't eat *Paxillus involutus*!