

Collybia tuberosa

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Heinz Clémenton (*Cytology and Plectology of the Hymenomycetes*. J. Cramer, Berlin, 2004) writes that "the pip-shaped sclerotia of *Collybia tuberosa* are physiologically polarised and germinate with their pointed apex. Disks cut transversely from the sclerotium also germinate with the side that was pointed towards the apex".

For interest sake I will give in full Greville's comments about this species, which he knew as *Agaricus tuberosus*.

This is a very curious plant, and has given rise to much uncertainty respecting its extraordinary root. Until Persoon published his *Synopsis Fungorum*, authors had supposed this tuberous root to be really a part of the plant ; but Persoon considered it as another plant, and called it *Sclerotium fungorum*. Subsequent writers do not seem to have made up their minds on the subject, generally contenting themselves with quoting Persoon's observations. De Candolle, in a memoir on the genus *Sclerotium*, in the *Mémoires du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*, v. ii. p: 401., describes the tuber as a true *Sclerotium*. Lastly, Fries, in his *Systema Mycologicum*, affirms the stem of the agaric to terminate in *Sclerotium cornutum*, (*S. fungorum* of Persoon).

I have examined the root of this curious agaric with great attention, and am rather inclined to believe it a part of the plant. In every specimen I have seen, the agaric invariably rises from the smallest extremity of the tuber, never from the side ; and under the microscope, I have traced a continuation of the substance of the stem into the tuber, as perfectly as my dissecting instruments would allow me to do. Besides, I am not aware that the tuber has ever been found without the agaric, or at least traces of its having been attached to one. Bulliard has a figure of one tuber giving rise to several stems, which, if correct, rather strengthens the idea of its not being a distinct substance ; and De Candolle, in the 2d volume of the *Flore Française*, p. 178., gives so minute a detail of the growth of the tuber, from the size of a *petite graine ou tubercle*, to its full dimensions, along with the agaric, in the form of a *filet menu, blanc, et surmonté d'une petite tête*, that it is difficult to conceive how two different plants should so constantly be found together, and invariably attached in the same manner, i.e. at the projecting points or extremities only.

Agaricus alumnus of Bolton I have little doubt belongs to our present species, though he says it wants the tuber : this may easily be conceived to have been detached in gathering it.

Greville recorded it as growing in woods " on several of the larger Agarics, when completely black and decayed; also on the ground, among moss and dead leaves". It has been found on a variety of fungi with species of *Lactarius* and *Russula* being favoured hosts.

The caps of *Collybia tuberosa* are a centimetre or so in diameter.