

## Olive Earthtongue

### Description

Earth tongues are one of the groups of fungi that indicate old unfertilised grassland. This species is usually easy to identify due to its unusual colours.

This species is a narrow stem supporting a wider, often flattened cylindrical head looking like a tongue sticking out of the earth. The colours are very variable, ranging from red brown to green and often containing a mix of these colours in the one fruiting body. Sometimes it can lack the green colours and some colour variants can be carmine pink. Under the microscope, the spores are colourless and usually non-septate (perpendicular divisions within the spores).



The earliest fruiting body recorded in Northern Ireland was found on 27 September and the latest on 24 November. Earth tongues typically appear late in the season with a peak in November and are often found in December as well, so it would not be surprising if this species is also found so late in the season. Some populations occur every year in the same place at the same time of year, and so can be refound with ease if you know where to look.

### Distribution

Found in various habitats in Northern Ireland, such as upland acidic grassland, sand dunes, neutral grasslands and churchyards. Sites like Cloghy Dunes on the Ards Peninsula, Barnett's Park in Belfast, Binevenagh NNR, Crossmurrin NNR in Fermanagh and Kebble NNR on Rathlin Island are all good sites to see this species.

### Action

UK Species Action Plan which was published in 1999:

1. Five of the twelve sites are designated ASSI or NNR sites.
2. A grassland fungi survey funded by EHS produced an overview of the distribution of the species.
3. Production of Grassland Fungi conservation leaflet by Fungal Conservation Forum
4. Implementation of the Northern Ireland habitat action plans for habitats of the species.

### Further Information

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/priority/species.asp?item=17521>

### MLA Species Champion

Northern Ireland  
**Fungus Group**

