

Hericium erinaceus on Naphill Common

Report and photographs by Peter Davis

This rare *Hericium erinaceus* fungus, not seen on Naphill Common for about 5 years, can be found at about 15ft up the 'Great Beech' next to Dew Pond on Naphill Common. In 2003 this species was red-listed in 13 of the 23 European countries in which it had been recorded. There are an estimated 105 trees in Britain that are known to have supported fruiting of *Hericium erinaceus*.



As first seen on 15th November 2011 (not seen on 6th November). Must be less than 10 days old.

It is on the south facing side on the tree.



Same day showing a close up of it situated in the damaged area of the tree where a branch has broken off many years before.



Side view on the same day.

Hericium erinaceus fruitbodies are large and often high on living tree trunks, comprises a solid cushion, 5 – 40 cm in diameter, white to creamy at first discolouring to yellowish with age. Hanging, long pendulous crowded spore-producing spines, 10-40 mm long.



It has grown very slowly over the last month as can be seen from this photograph taken on 10th December.

Here it is about 30 cm from top to bottom.

Close up of the spines.



By the 30th December the colour is changing to yellowish, darker in places.



14th January - the specimen is now starting to come away from the main body of the tree on a 'stalk' which can be easily seen in this photograph taken 29th January. The specimen is slowly getting darker in colour.



5th January 2012 – after a heavy snow fall the specimen seems to be unaffected.



25th February – Specimen showing signs of dying.

As it falls away from the trunk of the tree one can clearly see the method of attachment to the tree itself.



11th March – although the fruit body has more or less completed its role of spreading the fungal spores and appears ‘dead’, the fungus continues to live within the wood of the tree and might possibly produce a new fruiting body next year.