

# UPSIDE DOWN CAP

- 🍄 **Height:** 1-2in
- 🍄 **Classification:** Fungus
- 🍄 **Substrate:** Kura roots



The upside down cap is a slow-growing fungus that enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the kura plant. They symbolise luck because of their rarity.

## Physiology

The upside down cap is closely related to the desert waxlobe, and grows in the desert. Its stalk is soft and partly grows in a 180 degree curve, and partly flops so that when the fruiting body is fully mature, its cap is upside down, presenting its gills to the sky.

It is slow-growing and only occasionally creates a fruiting body so is a relatively unusual sight.

### *Reproduction*

This fungus relies on dew for spore dispersal and is ready once the fruiting body has completely inverted its cap. Dew forms on the gills overnight and in the morning, when the dew evaporates, the mushroom's spores are carried away with it. Aside from this, some small animals visit upside down caps to drink dew from the gills in the early morning. These animals move on afterwards and shed spores from their muzzles or beaks.

### Medical Conditions

This fungus is harmless and is not known to host any diseases.



## **Geographical Distribution**



This is one of a few fungi that grow in the desert. As it relies on dew for spore dispersal, it only grows in areas with higher humidity such as along the coastline or at the edge of the desert.

## **Position in Ecosystem**

The fine roots of the upside down cap require the relatively fine roots of kura to grow in as a substrate. They don't kill the kura unless they grow in very large numbers, but this is rare in itself. In return, they allow individual kura to communicate with each other: if one is carved then the others nearby grow tougher skin.

Only small animals benefit from the dew collected by the upside down cap. Anything larger than a terrestrial rabbit is too large to do the delicate work of lapping the dew out of the fungus' inverted cup. Typically, smaller species of athmook, jawagora, kasulam, and tummerwen benefit from the water they find in these fungi.

## **Technology**

This fungus has not contributed anything to the technology of Kaleida.

## **Agriculture**

The only benefit the upside down cap provides to Kaleida is a few drops of dew, which benefit small animals, and even then, only occasionally due to the infrequency of the fungus' growth of fruiting bodies. Therefore it has not been cultured.

## History

The upside down cap has no notable role in Kaleida's history.

## **Evolution / Genesis**

This fungus has played a role in the evolution of the kura, and the kura has influenced the evolution of the fungus, all due to the symbiotic nature of these two species' relationship. Beyond that, little can be said for the upside down cap's evolutionary journey.

It may not help that this fungus grows very slowly and only seldom appears.



The infrequency with which the upside down cap produces mushrooms means that it has little presence in Kaleidan culture. However, it is considered good luck to find one.

### **Food**

The upside down cap is not palatable.

### **Art**

This fungus may occasionally show in art; it is most notable for its rarity. To see one is considered lucky. They are not usually picked because they are believed to be rare (although this is untrue: many of the kura that are analysed are found to have kura fibres among their roots), and a picked mushroom tends to disintegrate easily and be hard to distinguish from another mushroom - the stalk is too soft to hold its shape once picked.

### **Religion and Spirituality**

The rarity and 'lucky' status of the upside down cap has led Kaleidan shamans to regard them as a good omen, and one to be left in situ rather than picked and used. Some shamans may take a leaf from the fungus' accompanying kura for use in medicines.

## **Politics**

The upside down cap is all but irrelevant to the world of politics. A tribal leader may see one and take it as a good omen, but that's between them and their own sense of superstition.

## **Economy**

This fungus does not benefit Kaleida's economy in any way.

## **Education**

Kaleidans don't tend to benefit from educating their offspring about this fungus. Usually the 'lesson' about their existence comes from a youngsters noticing one, asking what it is, and a caregiver telling them that they're for good luck.

## **Healthcare and Medicine**

Upside down caps are neither medicinal nor poisonous. However, some shamans may take a leaf from the fungus' accompanying kura for use in medicines, and employ a placebo effect by informing their patients of the provenance of the leaf before using it in a preparation.



## **Credits**

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy