

# New Species of Blue Mushroom Found in Southwest China

A new species of blue *Entoloma* mushroom was recently discovered by a group of researchers led by XU Jianchu from the Kunming Institute of Botany (KIB), Chinese Academy of Sciences and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

The new species was found in Mengsong village, Damenglong Township, Jinghong County in China's southwestern Yunnan Province, and has been named *Entoloma mengsongense*.

The newly discovered mushroom belongs to the Entolomataceae family, which is comprised of around 1,000 species. Like its relatives, it is completely blue from cap to stem apart from its pink gills.

The new mushroom is already drawing attention on the internet for an intriguing reason. Last year, another mushroom species from the same family played a part in a popular Chinese meme: a video clip of a young man complaining that he “feels bad, wants to cry” (nanshou xiangku) went viral because in the man's heavy Guangxi accent, it sounded like he was repeating “skinny blue mushroom” (lanshou xianggu). Chinese netizens quickly photoshopped the man's face onto a real ‘skinny blue mushroom’ – *Entoloma hochstetteri*, which was found in New Zealand and India – and a meme was born.

*Entoloma* mushrooms are often seen in habitats such as rainforests, woodlands, grasslands, and arctic or alpine forests. As institutions such as KIB and ICRAF have made efforts to catalogue China's fungal diversity, increasing numbers of *Entoloma* species have been discovered in Yunnan and other southern provinces.

The new finding has been published in the *Turkish Journal of Botany*. Their study was supported by the



*Entoloma mengsongense*. (Photo: Samantha C. Karunaratna)



*Entoloma hochstetteri*. (Photo: Steve Axford)

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