

ForestrySA | MEDIA RELEASE

9 May 2016

Take a trip down Ghost Mushroom Lane

Members of the community now have the opportunity to view a unique glowing fungus in its natural forest environment, thanks to a free night-time drive experience presented by ForestrySA.

The Ghost Mushroom is now in season and thousands of people have already ventured out into the pine forest after dark to see them.

ForestrySA has located a large colony of the luminous mushroom in pine forest near Glencoe, about 16km north west of Mount Gambier.

Aptly named Ghost Mushroom Lane, the 2.3km self-drive trail is clearly marked, allowing everybody to enjoy the experience from the comfort of their own vehicle or on foot.

Known scientifically as *Omphalotus nidiformis*, the Ghost Mushroom emits soft green glow as a result of a chemical reaction between fungal enzymes and oxygen. This glow can be bright enough to make out the letters on a page.

The mushroom typically emerges after late autumn rains and continues into winter, often growing to a width of 20cm.

ForestrySA Conservation Planner Troy Horn said ForestrySA said public reaction to the initiative had been positive, with close to 1,000 cars visiting the site on opening weekend.

"We have been very pleased with the level of respect our forest visitors have shown to the site," he said.

"We are striving to make this experience as interactive as possible, so when you get to the site please collect a ghost marker and place it along the lane-side to help others find the mushroom.

"We're also encouraging visitors to post their pics and experiences on Instagram, Facebook and other social media platforms, to help spread the word about this really exciting experience."

Information, maps and images can be found at www.forestrysa.com.au/ghostmushrooms, while The Lady Nelson Information and Visitor Centre has also agreed to assist with directions and enquiries.

Well known local photographer and environmental enthusiast Ockert le Roux has also produced a photographer's guide to the Ghost Mushroom, to help all snap-happy visitors obtain the perfect shot. This guide is available for download from the ForestrySA website.

"For those keen to take a walk and view the mushrooms up close, warm clothes and sensible shoes and a torch are a recommended. People are encouraged to take care walking in the forest environment at night and be courteous to other participants," Mr Horn said.

"For the enjoyment of others, please leave the mushrooms exactly as you find them. The mushrooms are poisonous if eaten, although accidental touching is not harmful"

For more information and interviews contact:

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This unique community project would not have been possible without the contributions of a number of local groups and individuals. Special thanks go to Ockert le Roux, OneFortyOne Plantations, The Lady Nelson Visitor and Discovery Centre and Mount Gambier Tourism.

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