Leucopaxillus tricolor on offer at your local supermarket

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Situated in the middle of a supermarket carpark here in Winchester there is a stand of mature beech trees on calcareous soil. Over the years several interesting fungi have been recorded here including the colourful *Cortinarius croceocaeruleus*. During a visit in late August 2024 things looked fairly barren fungi wise with only a few gone-over boletes and a group of rather scrappy looking agarics with dingy buff caps with an inrolled margin and bright yellow gills. Thinking this was going to be a *Tricholoma*, I was rather surprised to find the collected specimen had dropped a white print of amyloid ovoid spores with isolated warts suggesting this was a *Leucopaxillus*. My collection, using *Funga Nordica* (2012), keys out to *Leucopaxillus tricolor*, the contrasting yellow gills being an identification feature (Fig. 1).

Roger Phillips (2006) in the 2nd edition of his book includes *Leucopaxillus tricolor* giving the habitat of mixed woods in mainland Europe but not recorded for Britain. It is a large species recorded reaching up to 25 cm across. The photograph in Roger's book is a distinct match for my collection. A look on the FRDBI now shows two records for *L. tricolor*, one from Cambridgeshire dated September 2008, the second from North Hampshire dated August 2019. Both collections were, as mine, from under *Fagus*.

So why spend time travelling to exotic locations when you can pick up rare and interesting fungi at your local supermarket?

[Editor's note: this species has also been found this year in large numbers on the North Downs, Surrey, again under *Fagus*, see back cover. The largest one seen had indeed reached 25 cm across]

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References

Knudsen, H. & Vesterholt, T. (Eds). (2012). *Funga Nordica*, Nordsvamp.
Phillips, R. (2006) *Mushrooms*. Macmillan.

Fig. 1. *Leucopaxillus tricolor* showing its distinctive yellow gills and pinkish cap colours. Photo © Graham Mattock.