

## conical wax cap *Hygrocybe conica*

Kingdom: Fungi

Division/Phylum: Basidiomycota

Class: Agaricomycetes

Order: Agaricales

Family: Hygrophoraceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The body of a fungus (mycelium) is made up of strands called mycelia. The mycelium grows within the soil, a dead tree or other object and is rarely seen. The fruiting body that produces spores is generally present for only a short period of time but is the most familiar part of the fungus to people. The conical wax cap is also known as the witch's hat or conical slimy cap. The cap of this fungus may be three-fourths to two and one-half inches wide. This cone-shaped cap has an edge that may be turned upward. The color of the cap is variable and may be red, orange, yellow or green-yellow. The hollow stalk is about two to four inches tall. It is white at the base and yellow or orange above. The gills are white-yellow at first changing to yellow-orange, sometimes with green, as they age.

### BEHAVIORS

The conical wax cap may be found throughout Illinois. It grows singly or in groups in woodlands. Unlike plants, fungi do not have roots, stems, leaves, flowers or seeds. The conical wax cap must absorb nutrients and water from the objects it grows in. Spores are usually produced in late fall and early winter but may be produced at other times when conditions are favorable, generally with warm temperatures and ample moisture. The spores provide a means of reproduction, dispersal and survival in poor conditions.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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