

## *Mycena leaiana*, the Orange *Mycena*

If you like the color orange, you will love the little orange *Mycena leaiana*. This very common woodland mushroom can be found growing on sticks and logs from mid-spring through the fall. The cap starts out a deep orange color, but will fade to a dull yellow after a heavy rain. The cap can be up to 4 cm (1.7 inches) in diameter, but sometimes you can find a young specimen that is just a few millimeters across. It is not unusual to find a single *M. leaiana* on a stick, but more often they grow in caespitose clusters, meaning that many mushrooms emanate from a single point on the stick or log.



Photo by Jim Frink

One of the most interesting features of this mushroom is its marginate gills. Those of you that are experienced gardeners will know this means the edge of the gills are a different color than the face of the gills. The gill edges are a bright orange, like the cap, while the face of the gills are cream colored.

Tom Volk's featured mushroom article from September 2005

[http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms\\_fungi/sep2005.html](http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/sep2005.html) has a great microscopic image of the gill edge.



Photo by Glen Schwartz

When Dean Abel first introduced this mushroom to me, he called it the Lady Lion. Not sure where he got that name, but that does not appear in the literature for most reference websites. The mushroom is actually named for Thomas Gibson Lea (1785-1844), an amateur naturalist from Cincinnati, who was a prolific collector of fungi. The proper way to make an epithet honoring someone is to add *iana* to their name. This also makes it much easier to remember how to spell this *Mycena* – start with the name Lea, then add *iana* – to end up with *Mycena leaiana*.

Glen



Photo by Glen Schwartz