

“RUGDA” *A Tribal Delicacy*

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‘**R**UGDA’ (*Astraeus hygrometricus*), a rare and wild indigenous edible mushroom, is found in the dense humid sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest areas of the red lateritic zone of the Chotanagpur plateau of West Bengal, comprising Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum and West Midnapore districts. To the local tribal communities, it is also known as Futka, Khudki and Pattu. Rugda grows naturally under the soil at the base of sal trees during the rainy season (July-August).

High rainfall, moderate sunlight and a temperature of 28°C-30°C is considered congenial for the growth and

development of this unique indigenous mushroom. The decaying sal leaves make rich humus for the growth of this mushroom. It appears first in the sal forest with the onset of monsoon rain and can be identified by slight rises in the ground where it is unearthed. It is developed underground naturally during the rainy season. There are different edible species of this mushroom, but only the white coloured variety is deemed to be the most nutritious.

Rugda is renowned for its elevated level of nutritional composition. It is a unique, delicious and nutritional food of the rural tribal communities of West Bengal. It has become