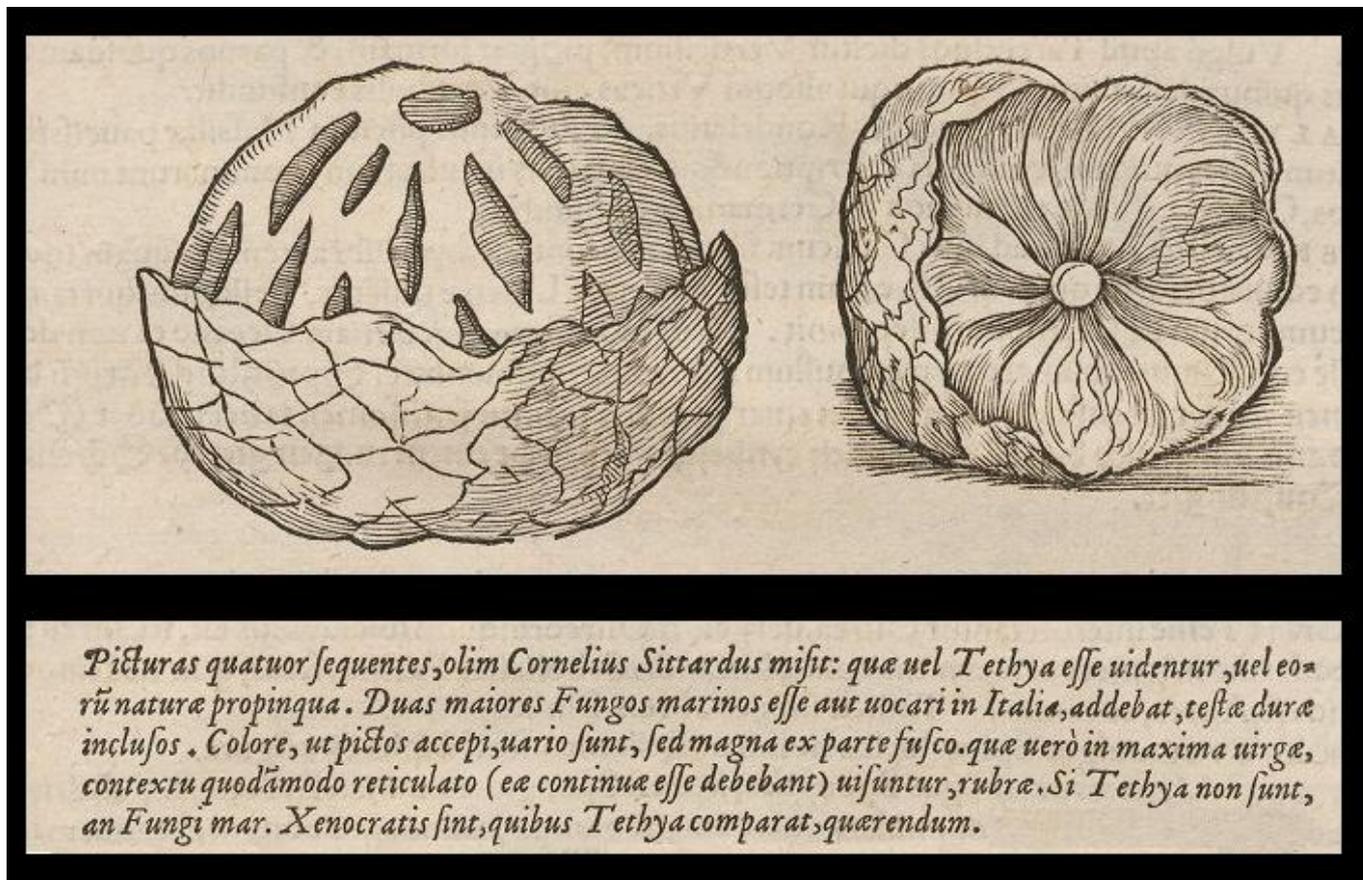


## *Clathrus ruber*

The two illustrations on this page have been taken from Conrad Gessner's *Nomenclator aquatiliū animantium*, which was published in 1560. The same illustrations had appeared two years earlier in Gessner's *Historiæ animalium*. He mistakenly thought this to be a marine organism and in the caption you can see it referred to as "Fungus marinos".



Source: Image courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden (<http://www.botanicus.org>)

In the original the caption precedes the illustrations and starts by referring to the "following four pictures which Cornelius Sittardus had sent some time ago". I have reproduced only the pair depicting *Clathrus ruber* and have omitted also the words pertaining to the other two. Gesner notes it is called *Fungos marinos* in Italy, has a tough skin, is net-like and is mixed in colour (red but also with dark parts, which would refer to the spore slime within).

These illustrations are mentioned in a 1996 paper by L.B. Holthuis (Original watercolours donated by Cornelius Sittardus to Conrad Gessner, and published by Gessner in his (1558-1670) works on aquatic animals, *Zoologische Mededelingen Leiden*, **70**, 169-196). According to Holthuis this species "was mistaken for a marine form, probably because all of Sittardus' other figures depicted marine species". The coloured illustration of *Clathrus ruber*, on the right, is from a small identification booklet, *Guide pour reconnaître les champignons comestibles et vénéneux du pays de France*, by Krœnischfranck (an alias for Arthur Eloffe) and published in the later 1800s. The booklet was aimed at the general public and the illustration, though simplistic, presents the essential features of this *Clathrus* quite well.

