

A giant mushroom measuring four times the size of a football has been found by a couple in Aberdeenshire.

The unusual find, discovered growing in a field, measures 3ft long and weighs about 9kg.

Scientists have identified the mushroom as a gigantic puff-ball (*Calvatia Gigantea*), a variety of the fungi rarely found in Scotland.

Ian Wakley, who found the mushroom, said he wanted to eat it but his wife Judith would not let him.

He said: "At first I thought it was a giant football.

"I wanted to take it home, fry it in butter and eat it, but my wife thought differently.

"It is huge - at least three or four times the size of a football."

Mrs Wakley added: "I've never seen anything like it before - it was like a gigantic pumpkin.

"It was so big and astonishing to see. Our children compared it to a giant cauliflower.

"I've been told that you can eat them - the bigger they are the less tasty they are.

"Apparently the huge ones are full of spores and don't taste as good as the small ones."

The couple have handed their mushroom over to scientists at the University of Aberdeen.

Fungi expert Dr David Genney revealed that it was common to find the mushroom in England rather than Scotland.

But he added: "It's an amazing size - you don't come across these everyday.

"A 9kg mushroom is a pretty big one.

"I can't say if it is record or not but it would be interesting to find out."