

## INDEMNITY FOR AUSTRALASIAN FUNGAL POISONING NETWORK CONSULTANTS

All members should be aware that the Australasian Fungal Poisoning Network that was proposed at the Annual General Meeting in October 96 is now very much in the balance and may even cease to exist before it is formed. The problem is medical indemnity. As most members would realise, the 'American litigation disease' is now well and truly established in Australia with the legal profession actively encouraging people to sue for vast sums of money with the result that professions such as medical practitioners are compelled to take out huge annual premiums to cover costs of litigation.

During the early stages of the Network's formation, letters went out to all the Australian State Poisons Centres and the reply from most Centres was that the Network's concept was excellent and urgently required. One of these replies did, however, raise several points, one of which was medical indemnity for the consultants. Considerable discussion by email, telephone and letter ensued but the legally confirmed situation as it now stands is: the moment a network mycologist provides information over the telephone, he or she assumes a 'duty of care' and the patient is able to sue for negligence. While the disclaimers we use to preface our telephone information may reduce the risk considerably and make a legal case quite difficult to win, this is still untested and would still incur the consultant considerable legal costs even if the case was resolved in favour of the consultant. Further, the Poisons Centres are now aware that all of their consultants are 'in the same boat' unless they are legally indemnified by their own institution and they therefore stand to lose other consultants as well as the mycologists.

Several avenues are being explored, one of which is to obtain indemnity from a commercial firm and this is likely to be available, but the costs are as yet unknown. The problem of indemnity protection for 'good Samaritan' services such as the Network still remains, however, and it is appalling that a needed and free service should be in jeopardy because of this litigation problem. I should very much like to see the Australasian Mycological Society take up this problem urgently at a National/ministerial level with the aim of having suitable 'Good Samaritan' legislation passed at both Federal and State levels to indemnify and protect such people as the Poison Centre consultants. Otherwise, an extremely useful and worthy project will never be able to function.

Dr Tony Young  
Convenor, Australasian Fungal Poisoning Network

## FUNGI FROM THE MYCOLOGY POST-CONFERENCE FORAY OCTOBER 1996

Tom May  
National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Fourteen participants enjoyed a spell of fine spring weather at the foray after the Australasian Mycological Society conference in October. We visited wet forests and rainforest in the vicinity of Marysville. In these types of forests the peak of the macrofungal season is usually in Autumn, so October is not the best time for observing macrofungi. Nevertheless there had been some heavy rain in the week prior to our visit (especially on the day which we drove to Marysville!) and 68 species of fungi were recorded. Species of *Cortinarius*, *Russula* and other mycorrhizal agarics are plentiful in the area in Autumn, but few were seen during our visit. Most species present were wood-inhabiting agarics, polypores and thelephores. Two interesting fungicolous fungi were collected, a *Tremella* on *Xylobolus illudens* and *Endogone pisiformis* on *Amauroderma rude*.

**Endogone pisiformis** Link : Fr., *Syst. Mycol.* 2: 296 (1823)

Fruit body pale pink, white when dry, up to 3 mm diam., like a rubber ball pushed in on one side, with the hollow side facing the substrate. Spores numerous, globose to subglobose, often bluntly angular, 32-49 × 25-35 µm, hyaline in water, reddish brown (dextrinoid) in Melzer's reagent, in these mountants with wall to 3 µm thick (a very thin outer wall possibly present), when mounted in Ammonium Hydroxide (with Congo Red) up to 6 µm thick, in water or Melzer's reagent contents granular or with numerous very fine refractive droplets, and usually with one large refractive droplet, rarely with a few large droplets. Hyphae up to 4 µm diam., thick-walled, hyaline in water. Gregarious on upper surface of old fruit bodies of *Amauroderma rude* at base of *Acacia*, in Cool Temperate Rainforest (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*).

The hollow fruit bodies and the habit, are a good match against the description of *E. pisiformis* by Gerdemann & Trappe (1974), although the spores differ from the zygospores which they describe in their thinner wall which lacks an obvious outer wall, and in the presence of a single large droplet rather than numerous small droplets. *Endogone pisiformis* is widespread in the Northern Hemisphere where it occurs on a variety of substrates, including old fruit bodies of polypores. It seems not to have been recorded previously from Australia. Specimens from Lady Talbot Drive collected during the foray were not retained, but the same species was also observed a few weeks later on fallen eucalypt wood in a *Eucalyptus regnans* forest near Powelltown (MEL). The small size of the fruit bodies means that the fungus is easy to overlook, and it could well be more common.

#### LOCALITIES VISITED

- (1) 6.10.96. Lady Talbot Drive, walk from The Beeches to Meeting of the Waters. Cool Temperate Rainforest with *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, *Atherosperma moschatum*, and tree ferns, with some *Eucalyptus regnans*.
- (2) 6.10.96. Margaret Gap. Eucalypt forest.
- (3) 6.10.96. Night walk to Steavensons Falls. Eucalypt forest.
- (4) 7.10.96. Lake Mountain, walk to Echo Flat. Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) woodland and alpine heathland.
- (5) 7.10.96. Cambarville, Tall Tree Walk, return via road. *Eucalyptus regnans*, with a small patch of Cool Temperate Rainforest (*Nothofagus*).
- (6) 7.10.96. Blackwood Lodge, Marysville. Eucalypts and garden plants.
- (7) 8.10.96. Somers Park, Acheron Way. *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, *Eucalyptus regnans*.

#### FUNGI LIST

Selected synonyms are given in square brackets. The form '*Psathyrella* sp. [*Psilocybe echinata*]' indicates that the species belongs in *Psathyrella*, but the necessary new combination has not yet been made. Some voucher collections were secured, and these have been deposited at the National Herbarium of Victoria (MEL) and/or the Herbarium, Landcare Research, Auckland (PDD).

#### AGARICS

- Camarophyllopsis* sp. (pileipellis consists of brown-pigmented, clavate elements) (1) (MEL)
- Coprinus* sp. (5)
- Cortinarius* sp. (probably *Cortinarius* sp. A of May (1989), which has the pileus clothed initially in white fibrils, which later disappear, leaving a smooth, brown, translucent -striate surface ) (5, 7)
- Entoloma* sp. (brown, mycenoid) (7)
- Galerina* sp. (1)
- Hypholoma brunneum* (1)
- Hypholoma fasciculare* (normal and orange-gilled forms) (1)
- Laccaria canaliculata* (7)
- Laccaria masonii* (1)
- Marasmiellus affixus* (5)
- Mycena subcapillaris* group (5)
- Mycena* sp. (pileus with olive tints, lamellae strong pinkish vinaceous) (1)
- Panellus longinquus* (on fallen Snow Gum) (4)
- Panellus stipticus* (fallen eucalypt wood) (2, 5)
- Pholiota* sp. (cap up to 2 cm diam., brown, translucent-striate; stipe pale, glutinous below; spores smooth, thick-walled, with germ pore; chrysocystidia present) (2)
- Pholiotina* aff. *filaris* (stipe slender, with ample membranous ring). (5)
- Psathyrella* sp. [*Psilocybe echinata*] (pileus with distinct pyramidal warts when young) (2)
- Schizophyllum commune* (5)

#### CYPHELLOID FUNGI

- Rectipilus fasciculatus* [*Lachnella fasciculata*] (on bark of fallen Snow Gum branches) (4) (MEL)

#### THELEPHORES

- Acanthophysium sparsum* (3) (MEL)
- Meruliopsis corium* (on *Acacia* sp.) (1) (PDD)
- Peniophora incarnata* (on dead *Nothofagus* trunk) (5) (PDD)
- Punctularia strigosozonatum* (on fallen *Eucalyptus pauciflora* branches) (4, 5) (MEL, PDD)
- ? *Stereum ostrea* (very old fruit body) (7)
- Xylobolus illudens* (4, 5) (PDD)
- Yellow corticioid fungus (5) (MEL)

#### HYDNOID FUNGI

- Hydnum repandum* (a large specimen, pileus 7.5 cm diam., of the common form, stem staining orange upon handling) (1)
- Mycoacia subceracea* (forming waxy, yellow patches with a bumpy or toothed surface) (on fallen *Eucalyptus pauciflora* branches) (1, 4) (PDD)
- Steccherinum* sp. (small brackets, effused-reflexed) (7)

#### JELLY FUNGI

- Heterotextus miltinus* (4)
- Tremella fuciformis* (5)

*Tremella* sp. (fruit bodies up to 2 mm across, gregarious on hymenial surface of *Xylobolus illudens*. Basidia cruciate) (5) (MEL)

#### POLYPORES

*Amauroderma rude* (at base of *Acacia*) (1, 7) (PDD)

*Antrodiella zonata* [*Irpex zonatus*] (1) (PDD)

*Australoporus tasmanicus* [*Heterobasidion tasmanicum*] (1) (PDD)

*Fistulina* sp. (very old fruit body, pileus very hipsid) (5)

*Fomes hemitephrus* [*Fomitopsis hemitephrus*, *Heterobasidion hemitephrum*] (on trunk of living *Nothofagus cunninghamii*) (1, 5)

*Ganoderma* cf. *applanatum* (1, 5) (PDD)

*Grifola campyla* (1)

*Inonotus nothofagi* (1) (PDD)

*Laetiporus portentosus* (*Piptoporus portentosus*) (old fruit body, on ground near *Eucalyptus regnans*, presumably the cause of brown cubical rot commonly seen on stumps and in hollows of living *E. regnans*. Also present as *Xylostroma giganteum* anamorph among brown cubical rot on stump of *E. regnans*) (5) (PDD)

*Phellinus wahlbergii* (on base of living *Nothofagus cunninghamii*) (5) (PDD)

*Postia cretacea* (on living *Nothofagus cunninghamii*) (1) (PDD)

*Postia pelliculosa* (1) (PDD)

*Trametes lilacinogilva* (6)

*Trametes versicolor* (1, 7)

#### RUSTS

*Puccinia oleariae* (on *Olearia argophylla*) (1) (PDD)

#### PARTICIPANTS

Peter Austwick, Peter Buchanan, David Catcheside, Pamela Catcheside, Linden Gillbank, Sara Maroske, Tom May, Eric McKenzie, Ian Pascoe, Bettye Rees, Neville Rees, Katrina Syme, Mary Verstegen and Gretna Weste.

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#### References

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*Phragmidium violaceum* (on *Rubus*) (PDD)

#### ASCOMYCOTINA

*Biscogniauxia nothofagi* (present also as the *Nodulisporium* stage, olive powdery patches, often with a bright orange, fleshy margin) (1)

*Bisporella orites* (on follicles of *Orites lancifolia*) (4)

*Discinella terrestris* (7)

*Geoglossum* sp. (1) (MEL)

*Gibberidea plagia* (on *Cassinia aculeata*) (5) (PDD)

*Hypoxylon* sect. *Annulata* sp. (7)

*Hypoxylon bovei* (1)

*Jafneadelphus ferrugineus* (1)

*Labyrinthomyces* sp. (1, 5) (MEL)

*Lachnum* aff. *pteridophyllum* [*Dasyscypha pteridophylla*] (spores larger, up to 24 × 2 µm) (1) (MEL)

*Mollisia cinerea* (1, 5)

*Torrendiella eucalypti* (on fallen leaves of *Acacia melanoxylon*) (7)

*Xylaria hypoxylon*

*Xylaria polymorpha* (1)

Discomycete (white, on wood) (7)

Discomycete (white, hairy)

#### ZYGOMYCOTINA

*Endogone pisiformis* (1)

#### ANAMORPHS

*Isaria* sp. (on moth pupa) (1) (MEL)

#### MYXOMYCETES

*Arcyria* sp. (1)

*Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa* (5)