

DOES *CHLOROPHYLLUM MOLYBDITES* OCCUR IN NEW ZEALAND?

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Abstract

Published records of the occurrence in New Zealand of the Green Parasol Fungus, *Chlorophyllum molybdites*, are all traceable to a passing mention in a Russian agaric flora. Neither resident nor visiting agaricologists have recorded this conspicuous species within New Zealand, and it is assumed that the Russian reference is erroneous (perhaps originating as a mistranscription of either New Caledonia or New Guinea).

Bougher (1999) included New Zealand within the range of distribution of the Green Parasol Fungus, *Chlorophyllum molybdites* (G. Mey. : Fr.) Masee; and Moreno *et al.* (1995), in transferring the fungus to *Macrolepiota*, described it as having 'New Zealand representing its southern ... limit'. However, I have failed to authenticate any New Zealand occurrence of this conspicuous mushroom, either from herbarium specimens, or in the primary literature, or by questioning agaricologists familiar with the New Zealand mycoflora. There has also never been a New Zealand report of poisoning attributed to this mushroom, which is 'consistently the mushroom most commonly reported' in human poisonings in the U.S.A. (Augenstein 1994).

Both Bougher (1999) and Moreno *et al.* (1995) cited Reid & Eicker's (1991) review article in support of their statements. Reid & Eicker (1991) confirmed that there are no New Zealand collections of the species at Kew, and cited Wasser (1985) and Wasser & Zakordonets (1986) as the source of the information on its presence in New Zealand. Wasser (1985), in a monograph on the agaric flora of the USSR, described the non-USSR distribution of *C. molybdites* as [in Russian]—'Asia: Israel; N.America: USA; S.America: Brazil, Guyana; Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda; New Zealand'. Wasser & Zakordonets (1986), in a paper on the occurrence of *C. molybdites* in the Soviet Far East, described the non-USSR distribution of the fungus as [in Russian]—'N.America (Canada, USA, Mexico), S.America (Argentina, Brazil, Guyana), Asia (Japan, Israel, Philippines), Africa (Kenya, Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, UAR), New Zealand'.

These two bald statements, with no supporting data or references, appear to be the only 'record' of *C. molybdites* from New Zealand. It is unlikely that a Russian agaricologist, who (to the best of my knowledge) has neither visited nor had contact with New Zealand, should be privy to information that is not recorded in any New Zealand foray list, publication, or herbarium, and that is unknown to resident and visiting mycologists with encyclopaedic knowledge of the New Zealand fungal flora. It seems more probable that Wasser made an error. A possible hypothesis is that he was aware of collections of *C. molybdites* from either New Caledonia or New Guinea (both within the confirmed range of distribution (Reid & Eicker 1991)), but copied the wrong translation from his Russian gazetteer. (There is a precedent for the occurrence of such an error. The type localities of *Flagelloscypha pseudopanacis* and *Sphaerobasidioscypha citrispora* were both published as 'Neuguinea' (Agerer 1975, 1983), in error for New Zealand [pers. comm. from E. Horak, the collector of the respective holotype specimens].)

I would welcome any information that would resolve this puzzle. In the interim, I believe *C. molybdites* should be excluded from the list of fungi recorded from New Zealand. To quote Ira Gershwin's libretto to *Porgy and Bess*—'The things that you're liable to read ... It ain't necessarily so!'

References

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