MYCOLOGICAL RECORDS
1: DIPLODIA TAXI (SOWERBY) DE NOTARIS

GEOFF S. RIDLEY
New Zealand Forest Research Institute,
Private Bag 3020, Rotorua, New Zealand
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ABSTRACT
Diplodia taxi (Sowerby) de Notaris occurring on Taxus baccata Linnaeus is reported
as a new fungal record for New Zealand.
Keywords: Diplodia taxi; fungi; Coelomycete; Taxus baccata.

INTRODUCTION
A sample of Taxus baccata with yellowing and falling leaves was collected in a
churchyard at New Plymouth and was received 1 day later at the New Zealand Forest
Research Institute. No fungi were observed sporulating on the leaf surfaces and plating
produced only the saprophytic species Chaetomium sp. and Pestalotia sp. However, the
specimen was retained in its plastic bag and re-examined 17 days after receipt by which time
all of the chlorotic leaves had developed fruiting bodies of Diplodia taxi (Fig. 1C). This
fungus has not previously been recorded in New Zealand.

DESCRIPTION
Conidiomata pycnidial, ostiolate, flattened globose to broadly elliptical, immersed to
suberumpent, very dark brown to black (Fig. 1C). Ostiole circular, non-papillate, later host
cuticle splitting and peeling to give a slit or tri-stellate opening. Conidiophores simple,
hyaline to pale greenish, arising from brownish cells of the pycnidial wall; conidiogenous
cell producing terminal conidiospores, occasionally annulate (Fig. 1A). Conidiospores
hyaline to very pale green, thick-walled, obovate, 13.6–17.4 × 6.0–7.6 µm, initially aseptate,
but with maturation the beginnings of a subcentral septum often apparent (Fig. 1B).
Specimen examined: on Taxus baccata Linnaeus, St. Mary’s Church, New Plymouth,
2.xii.1993, B.Rogan 0079 (cult No.3240), NZFRI(M) 3510

DISCUSSION
The initial hyaline coloration of the conidiospores was given as a generic characteristic
of Diplodia by Sutton (1980) and as a specific characteristic of D.taxi by Ellis & Ellis (1985).

The latter authors further noted that *D. taxi* conidiospores eventually become smoky brown. The development of pigment failed to occur in the New Plymouth sample and therefore the conidiospores were not morphologically mature. This may also account for their smaller size compared with the description of conidiospores as 20–25 × 8–10 μm given by Ellis & Ellis.

Attempts at isolating from the fruit bodies yielded a very slow-growing mycelium. This slow development may account for the failure to detect it in the first isolation attempt. The only reference to pathogenicity of *D. taxi* was made by Greene (1946) when he noted that it “... occurred on languishing foliage of *Taxus* sp. in a nursery at Madison .... probably, but not certainly, saprophytic”. At this stage it would appear that in New Zealand *D. taxi* is not of any major significance.

**REFERENCES**

