
Short Communication

A new status and name for the endemic *Thelotremataceae* from the Azores

The *Thelotremataceae* is a predominantly tropical group, with only eight species known from Europe (Purvis *et al.* 1995; Mangold *et al.* 2006). Two of these eight species are only known from the Azores. One, *Thelotrema antonini* Purvis & P. James, is common in the upland regions of the Azores and is also known from Tanzania (Frisch 2006). It is not a *Thelotrema* in the strict sense, but belongs to an aggregate of uncertain affinities. Due to the heavy carbonization around the pore it resembles a pyrenocarpous lichen and is often wrongly identified as a *Pseudopyrenula*. It could be expected that a new genus will be erected to accommodate this group, but the species will not be reclassified here.

The other European species known only from the Azores is the taxon that was described as *Thelotrema perforatum* var. *pauciseptatum* Purvis & P. James. Although described in the genus *Thelotrema*, it (like the preceding species) differs from that genus in its present sense (and in the sense in use when it was described in 1995) in many characters, most notably the presence of a columella and the absence of periphyses. This species belongs to *Ocellularia*, differing from the preceding species in having, for example, ascospores that react IKI+ violet. This *Ocellularia* differs from all other species accommodated in the genus. It keys out close to *O. vezdana* Frisch (2006), but differs by consistently having fewer septa in the ascospores (3–5 versus 3–8) and, in particular, by the ascocarp rim, which is prominent and exserted, but is immersed in *O. vezdana*.

Although this taxon is similar to the pan-tropical *Ocellularia perforata* (Leight.) Müll. Arg., there is no *a priori* reason to assume that

these two taxa belong to the same species. The differences are marked, with the ascospore septation (3–5 versus 5–9) being the most conspicuous. Ascospore septation may be variable in *Thelotremataceae* species, but this is more marked when there are significantly more septa (e.g. >12), and less so when there are fewer septa; the difference between 3–5 and 5–9 septa is significant in all known *Thelotremataceae*. Further differences include a dense inspersion of the hymenium with tiny KOH-soluble crystals, ascospores that slowly turn brown and to some extent the variation in pore width, which is generally quite large, of the order of 2–3 times within a single specimen in the Azorean material (generally much smaller in *O. perforata*) and thallus colour (essentially grey in the Azorean material but greenish in *O. perforata*). As a consequence this taxon is now raised to species level.

***Ocellularia pauciseptata* Aptroot comb. et stat. nov.**

Basionym: *Thelotrema perforatum* var. *pauciseptatum* Purvis & P. James, in Purvis, Jørgensen & James, *Bibliotheca Lichenologica* 58: 350 (1995).

As such *O. pauciseptata* is the only species of *Ocellularia* known from Europe, since *Ocellularia atlantica* Erichs. has now been accommodated in the unrelated genus *Porina* (Jørgensen 2000). Previously *O. pauciseptata* was only known from the island of Pico, the type locality. It was reported to be quite rare and restricted to the Laurisilva vegetational zone (Purvis *et al.* 1995), and in need of protection. In contrast, personal observations in 2007 indicated that it is locally

quite abundant occurring on the bark of both conifer and angiosperm bark (e.g. *Juniperus brevifolia*, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, *Ilex azorica*) in a wide variety of inland habitats. Furthermore, during a recent field course on the island of Terceira, it was found at two different inland localities establishing that this species is more widespread and not actually threatened.

Representative specimen from Terceira. Azores: Terceira: Terra Brava, 650 m, on Ilex, 2008, Aptroot 68373 [ABL].

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