

First record of leaf spots and stem lesions on *Pistacia lentiscus* caused by *Cylindrocladium pauciramosum* and *C. scoparium* in Italy

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In November 2005, a foliage disease of mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*, Anacardiaceae) was noticed in one nursery located in Giarre (Catania) in eastern Sicily (southern Italy). Symptoms including leaf spots, stem lesions, and severe defoliation were observed on about 25% of the young (10–12 months old) and pot-growing seedlings. In high moisture conditions, leaf tissues were covered with a fluffy white mass of fungal mycelium and abundant conidia referable to the genus *Cylindrocladium*. Hyphal tips were transferred to potato dextrose agar and typical microsclerotia formed after two weeks.

The identification of the pathogens was performed on eight fungal colonies grown on carnation leaf agar (CLA) on the basis of their respectively obpyriform or pyriform to broadly ellipsoidal terminal vesicles, conidiophore branching pattern, and conidium morphology. Five of these colonies were identified as *C. pauciramosum* and the remaining three as *C. scoparium* (Polizzi & Crous, 1999; Crous 2002). In addition, their ability to mate with Italian and South African tester strains of selected *C. pauciramosum* and *C. scoparium* isolates, as well as perithecial morphology, confirmed the identification of fungal colonies. Pathogenicity tests were done by inoculating 1-year-old mastic tree seedlings with the conidial suspensions (1×10^5 CFU per mL) obtained from 14-day-old single-spore colonies of *C. pauciramosum* grown on CLA at 25°C. Control plants were sprayed with sterile distilled water. All plants were maintained in polyethylene bags in which the temperature was $25 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ and relative humidity was 95 to

100%. After a week, all inoculated plants developed severe symptoms similar to those observed originally in the nurseries. *Cylindrocladium pauciramosum* was always re-isolated from infected tissues thus fulfilling Koch's postulates. No symptoms were detected on the control plants.

Cylindrocladium scoparium was recently reported affecting mastic tree seedlings in the same area where it was responsible for leaf spots, stem lesions, blight, and crown rot (Polizzi *et al.*, 2006) but this is the first record of leaf spots, stem lesions, and defoliation of *P. lentiscus* caused by *C. pauciramosum* and it also represents the first report of coexisting infections due to both species.

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First report of brown patch on bristle basket grass in Iran

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The symptoms of brown patch or rhizoctonia blight on bristle basket grass (*Oplismenus hirtellus*) were observed in the summers of 1998 and 1999. The individual plant symptoms consisted of blighted spots, which gradually expanded to encompass the entire surface of the leaf. Affected grass areas had a diameter of approximately 1 m. Plants started to recover and resumed growth from the center of the patch outward, producing a ring pattern in the affected area. Dark brown sclerotia were abundantly produced on the diseased plants and in the soil. A multinucleate *Rhizoctonia* sp. was consistently isolated from blighted tissues. Based on colony and mycelial characteristics, the fungus was identified as *Rhizoctonia solani*, and the anastomosis group (AG) for all of these isolates was determined as AG 1 by anastomosis testing (Burpee & Martin, 1992; 1996). On the basis of cultural and sclerotial characteristics, a subset of the isolates was determined as AG 1-IA (Burpee & Martin, 1996). The mean hyphal diameter of AG 1-IA isolates was 7.0 μm , and the mean number of nuclei was 6.4 per hyphal cell. The colony was light brown on potato dextrose agar after 2 weeks of growth, and dark-brown sclerotia measuring 0.7 to 4 \times 1 to 4.5 mm were abundantly produced on the medium. Cardinal temperatures for growth of this isolate were 10, 28, and 35°C (minimum, optimum, and maximum, respectively). The linear growth rate at the optimum

temperature was 34 mm per day. Pathogenicity of the AG 1-IA isolate was confirmed by placing 8-mm disks taken from the margins of an actively growing colony on the leaves and sheaths of the host plant and pots were incubated in greenhouse conditions (25–28°C temperatures and more than 90% relative humidity) for one week (Kim, 1996). Symptoms observed were the same as those in the field, and the fungus was reisolated from the blighted tissue. This is the first report of brown patch disease on *O. hirtellus* in Iran.

References

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