

***Valsaria ceratoniae* Crous & M.J. Wingf., sp. nov.**

Mycobank: MB504458.

Etymology: Named after its host, *Ceratonia siliqua*.

Latin diagnosis: *Valsariae bambusae* similis, sed ascosporis minoribus, (14–)15–17(–18) × (7–)8(–9) µm.

Description: *Ascomata* solitary, subepidermal, globose, brown, up to 400 µm diam, unilocular, giving rise to a neck extending for up to 3 mm above the host tissue; medium brown, up to 150 µm wide, with a rounded tip and central ostiole; walls thick, consisting of 3–7 layers of brown *textura angularis*. *Asci* subcylindrical, sessile, 90–120 × 10–12 µm, unitunicate, with a rounded apex containing an apical discharge mechanism. *Paraphyses* hyaline, septate, intermingled among asci, somewhat constricted at septa, 2–3 µm wide. *Ascospores* uniseriate, 1-septate, ellipsoidal with rounded ends, constricted at central septum, (14–)15–17(–18) × (7–)8(–9) µm, coarsely warted. Single ascospore colonies initially yeast-like, later becoming filamentous; hyphae septate, branched, smooth to warty, brown. On 2 % potato-dextrose agar (PDA)¹ giving rise to uni- or multilocular spermatogonia with elongated necks (similar to ascomata). *Spermatogenous cells* lining the cavity, situated on one or two basal cells, hyaline, subcylindrical, up to 18 µm long, 2–3 µm wide, apex with visible periclinal thickening. *Spermatia* ellipsoidal, hyaline, smooth, 2–3 × 1–1.5 µm.

Cultural characteristics: Colonies on PDA spreading with sparse to no aerial mycelium and irregular catenulate margins; chestnut with patches of umber and sepia, spermatogonia appearing hazel because of hyphae around the spermatogonial necks; colonies reaching 40 mm diam after 2 months on PDA at 25 °C in the dark. Germinating ascospores form a small cluster of yeast cells on PDA and malt extract agar (MEA)¹.

Typus: Greece, Rhodes, old town castle, N36°26'43.6", E28°13'24.1", on branches of *Ceratonia siliqua*, 1 June 2006, collected by P.W. Crous & M.J. Wingfield, CBS H-19925, **holotypus**, culture ex-type CPC 13245 = CBS 121714, CPC 13246, GenBank EU040213.

Notes: The genus *Valsaria* is morphologically heterogeneous². *Valsaria ceratoniae* is tentatively allocated to this genus, although it differs from other species by producing solitary ascomata with elongated necks, vs. valsoid ascomata lacking necks. However, it shares a similar ascus and ascospore morphology, as well as the typical yeast-like ascospore germination of other members of *Valsaria*. Because the complex is in need of revision, *V. ceratoniae* is not assigned to a separate genus, but this may become necessary after further collections and studies have been completed.

BLASTn results of the ITS sequence of *V. ceratoniae* strain CPC 13245 had a distant relation to sequences of *Phyllosticta abietis* Bissett & M.E. Palm (AF312012, 90 % identical over 251 nucleotides), *Scytalidium hyalinum* C.K. Campb. & J.L. Mulder (AY213688, 82 % identical over 393 nucleotides) and *Botryosphaeria vaccinii* (Shear) M.E. Barr (AF243404, 95 % identical over 199 nucleotides).

Colour illustrations: *Ceratonia siliqua* tree growing adjacent to castle wall in Rhodes (old town); erumpent ascomatal necks; asci and paraphyses; ascus with apical mechanism; ascus with brown, verruculose ascospores (P.W. Crous). Scale bars = 200, 10, 10 & 10 µm.

References: ¹Gams W, Verkley GJM, Crous PW (2007). *CBS course of mycology*. 5th ed. Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures, Utrecht, Netherlands. ²Ju Y-M, Rogers JD (1996). *Valsaria* and notes on *Endoxylina*, *Pseudothyridaria*, *Pseudovalsaria*, and *Roussoella*. *Mycotaxon* **58**: 419–481.

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