

A NEW AUSTRALIAN LICHEN: CLADONIA SULCATA

by

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Psoromic acid is a relatively uncommon β -depsidone in the lichen genus *Cladonia*. About 5% (14 out of 276) of the species and varieties of *Cladonia* of which the chemistry is known (Culberson 1969, 1970; Culberson, Culberson and Johnson, 1977) contain psoromic acid and of these 14 only three contain psoromic acid and atranorin. These are *C. norrlinii* Vain. (Vainio, 1922) from north America (Thomson, 1967) and Europe (Ahti, 1977), *C. subconistea* Asah. from Japan (Asahina, 1941) and Taiwan (Ahti and Lai, 1979) and *C. dahliana* Kristinsson reported to occur in Iceland, Greenland and Baffin Island (Kristinsson, 1974). A recent chemical examination of material from Victoria and Tasmania, tentatively identified as *C. diffissa* (F. Wils.) F. Wils. (Wilson, 1889, 1889a), showed some specimens to contain atranorin and psoromic acid, in contrast to the atranorin and norstictic acid found in *C. diffissa*. The specimens containing atranorin and psoromic acid were not referable to *C. norrlinii*, *C. subconistea* or *C. dahliana* and are here differentiated as a separate species.

DESCRIPTION

Cladonia sulcata A. W. Archer, sp. nov.

Thallus primarius squamulis, 1-3 mm longis, 0.3-1.5 mm latis, supra cinero-glauciscentibus, infra albis, nullis sorediis. Podetia ascendunt squamulis, 10-20 mm alta, nullis scyphis, parte supra ramosa, superficiebus sulcatis et subindescens, cortice continuo subgranularenti. Apotheciis ad apices podetiorum, fuscis, convexis, 0.3-0.6 mm diam. Ascospores non videt. Thallus K+ flavescens, C-, Pd+ flavus. Atranorinum et acidum psoromicum continens.

Primary thallus with squamules, 1-3 mm long, 0.3-1.5 mm wide, upper side pale green, below white, esorediate. *podetia* arising from the squamules, 10-20 mm tall, lacking scyphi, grooved and becoming somewhat split; *cortex* continuous, becoming somewhat granular; *apothecia* on the tips of the podetia, dark brown, convex, 0.3-0.6 mm diam.; *ascospores* not seen. Thallus K+ weak yellow, C-, Pd+ yellow; containing atranorin and psoromic acid.

The presence of atranorin and psoromic acid was demonstrated by thin-layer chromatography and the identity of the compounds confirmed by co-chromatography with authentic samples of the two compounds.

TYPE COLLECTION: Australia, Victoria, 8 km east of Tawonga, on soil by side of Trapper's Creek Road, approximately 147°15'E, 36°41'S, altitude ca 700 m, 22.xi.1979, *Archer 803* (Holotype: MEL 1031486; Isotype: H, COLO).

ALSO EXAMINED:

Victoria—ca 2 km north of holotype collection site, 22.xi.1979, *Archer 860A* (MEL 1031487).

Tasmania—7 km north-east of Derwent Bridge, on soil by side of track near Cynthia Bay, Lake St. Clair, approximately 146°10'E, 42°7'S, altitude ca 700 m, 2.iii.1980, *Archer 889* (MEL 1031488).

DISCUSSION

The specific epithet *sulcata* refers to the grooved appearance of the podetia. Typical specimens are illustrated in figure 1.

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Muelleria 5(1): 115-117 (1982).

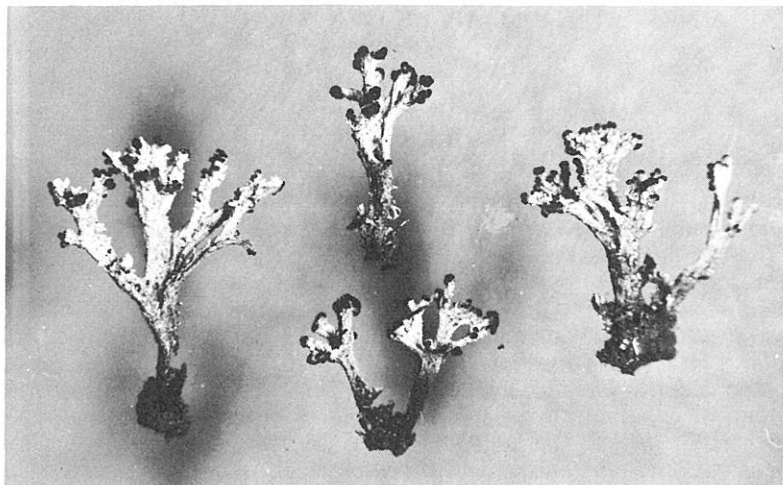


Fig. 1. *Cladonia sulcata*. Typical specimens showing podetia with apothecia. Scale in millimetres.

Cladonia sulcata is a member of the *C. cariosa* group and thus differs from the two Australian *Cladonia* species reported as containing psoromic acid. These are *C. staufferi* des Abb. (des Abbayes, 1966), a scyphose species first reported from Mt. Baw Baw, Victoria and an undescribed scyphose sub-alpine species (*Cladonia* sp. B, Dahl, 1970).

The new species differs from the superficially similar *C. diffissa* by the presence of psoromic acid and also in possessing less fissured podetia which, by exposing less of the white internal medullary hyphae, give *C. sulcata* a greenish appearance compared to the greyish-white appearance of *C. diffissa*. This latter feature is particularly noticeable when the two species are seen growing side by side as at the type location.

Psoromic acid also distinguishes *C. sulcata* from *C. corymbescens* Nyl. ex Leighton, which may occur in south-east Australia with *C. diffissa* but which contains atranorin and fumarprotocetraric acid.

The smaller squamules of *C. sulcata* distinguish this species from *C. dahliana* of the northern hemisphere and also from a chemical variety of *C. symphylicarpa* (Ach.) Fr., containing atranorin and psoromic acid, reported from the Great Lakes region of North America (Harris, 1975). The esorediate fissured podetia of *C. sulcata* provide a morphological distinction from the chemically similar but sorediate *C. norlinii* and from *C. subconistea*, an esorediate scyphose species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Dr J. A. Elix of the Australian National University for a gift of psoromic acid and to the Director, Division of Analytical Laboratories, Health Commission of New South Wales, for permission to publish this paper.

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Manuscript received 10 August 1981.