A new freshwater species of *Saccardoella* from Hong Kong and South Africa

K. M. Tsui
K. D. Hyde
I. J. Hodgkiss
T. K. Goh

Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

**Abstract:** *Saccardoella aquatica* sp. nov. occurring on wood submerged in streams in Hong Kong and South Africa is described and illustrated with differential interference micrographs. This species produces long, cylindrical asci and 3-septate ascospores surrounded by a mucilaginous sheath, and differs from other species in *Saccardoella* in having fusiform ascospores. A key and synopsis of *Saccardoella* species are provided.

**Key Words:** Ascomycetes, aquatic fungi, lignicolous fungi, systematics

During a survey of fungi found on submerged wood in streams in Hong Kong and South Africa, a new species belonging to *Saccardoella* was found. It is unique in producing fusiform, 3-septate, heavily gutulate ascospores surrounded by an inconspicuous sheath. It is here described as *S. aquatica* sp. nov. and illustrated with differential interference micrographs.

*Saccardoella aquatica* K. M. Tsui, K. D. Hyde, I. J. Hodgkiss & Goh, sp. nov. Figs. 1–11

Ascomata 560–700 μm alta, nigra, 640–720 μm diam., erumpentia vel imersa, globoa vel subglobosa, papillata, ostiolarata, coriacea, carbonacea, solitaria vel gregaria. Clypeata 10–6 μm crassa, ostiolum circum crassiora. Papilla conica, 125 μm alta, 150 μm in diam., peripherosa. Peridion 20–30 μm alta. Papilla conica, 125 μm alta, 150 μm diam, immersed or erumpent, globose or subglobose, papillate, ostiolate, coriaceous, carbonaceous, solitary to gregarious (Figs. 1, 2). Clypeus extending outwards around the ascocoma, 10–60 μm thick, thicker around the papilla, composed of dense, melanised cells in the host tissue (Figs. 1, 5). Papilla blunt conical, up to 125 μm high, 150 μm diam, brown with paraphyses (Fig. 1). Peridion 20–30 μm wide, wider around the ostiole, composed of two strata: an inner stratum of three to five layers composed of angular brown thin-walled cells forming a *textura angularis*, and an outer stratum composed of fungal hyphae interspersed with host cells forming a *textura intricata* (Fig. 5). Paraphyses numerous, 2–3 μm diam, filamentous and hypha-like (Fig. 11). Asci 185–230 × 7–9 μm (x = 204.2 ± 7.9 μm, n = 30), 8-spored, long-cylindrical or filiform, short-pedicellate, with an apical ring (Figs. 3–4, 6). Ascospores 26–34 × 6–8 μm (x = 29.2 ± 7.0 μm, n = 50), overlapping uniseriate, fusiform, with acute ends, 3-septate, constricted at the septa, hyaline, surrounded by an inconspicuous mucilaginous sheath (Figs. 7–10).

**Habitat.** Saprobic on submerged wood.

**Known distribution.** Hong Kong, South Africa.

**Other material examined.** Hong Kong. New Territories, Tai Po, Lam Tsuen River, on submerged wood, 22 Jan. 1997, K. M. Tsui, KM56 (HKU(M) 5371).

Colonies on potato dextrose agar superficial, cottony, white at the center, pale brown towards the margin; Reverse dark brown, growing in concentric rings, black in the center. No fruiting bodies or anamorphs formed in culture. Ascomata on natural substratum shiny, dark brown to black, 560–700 μm high, 640–720 μm diam, immersed or erumpent, globose or subglobose, papillate, ostiolate, coriaceous, carbonaceous, solitary to gregarious (Figs. 1, 2). Clypeus extending outwards around the ascomata, 10–60 μm thick, thicker around the papilla, composed of dense, melanised cells in the host tissue (Figs. 1, 5). Papilla blunt conical, up to 125 μm high, 150 μm diam, brown with paraphyses (Fig. 1). Peridium 20–30 μm wide, wider around the ostiole, composed of two strata: an inner stratum of three to five layers composed of angular brown thin-walled cells forming a *textura angularis*, and an outer stratum composed of fungal hyphae interspersed with host cells forming a *textura intricata* (Fig. 5). Paraphyses numerous, 2–3 μm diam, filamentous and hypha-like (Fig. 11). Asci 185–230 × 7–9 μm (x = 204.2 ± 7.9 μm, n = 30), 8-spored, long-cylindrical or filiform, short-pedicellate, with an apical ring (Figs. 3–4, 6). Ascospores 26–34 × 6–8 μm (x = 29.2 ± 7.0 μm, n = 50), overlapping uniseriate, fusiform, with acute ends, 3-septate, constricted at the septa, hyaline, surrounded by an inconspicuous mucilaginous sheath (Figs. 7–10).

**Etymology.** In reference to the freshwater habitat where this species was found.


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*Saccardoella aquatica* bears some resemblance to *S. marinospora* K. D. Hyde and *S. macrasca* (Sacc.) M. E. Barr which also produce 3-septate ascospores (Hyde, 1992; Barr, 1994). *Saccardoella macrasca* has consistently smaller asci and ascospores, and is unique in having more fusiform, distoseptate as-
Figs. 1–11. Interference micrographs of Saccardoella aquatica (from holotype) 1. Section of the ascomata. 2. Appearance of ascomata on submerged wood. 3, 4. Asci. 5. Section of the peridium. 6. Close-up of the ascus apex. Note the subapical apparatus (arrowed). 7–10. Ascospores. 11. Paraphyses. Scale bars: 1 = 500 µm, 2 = 400 µm, 3–4 = 40 µm, 5 = 50 µm, 6–10 = 10 µm, 11 = 40 µm.

cospores which taper towards their apices and lack a mucilaginous sheath (Barr, 1994). Ascii and ascospores of S. aquatica and S. marinospora are of similar dimensions but differ in a number of respects. S. aquatica has fusiform, 3-septate ascospores, whereas in S. marinospora the ascospores are broadly ellipsoidal. Furthermore, ascospores in S. aquatica are constricted at the septa, while constrictions are absent in S. marinospora. The ascomata in S. aquatica are also smaller (560–700 µm.
The ascus wall of *S. aquatica* is wide and similar to that found in other species of *Saccardoella*.

The genus *Saccardoella* is saprotrophic and widely distributed geographically, with species recorded from Austria, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Hong Kong, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, and USA, and species occur in terrestrial, aquatic and marine habitats. A mucilaginous sheath surrounding ascospores is found only in species reported from freshwater and marine habitats, i.e., *S. aquatica*, *S. mangrovei* K. D. Hyde, *S. marinospora*, and *S. rhizophorae* K. D. Hyde. The mucilaginous sheath may aid in the dispersal of ascospores and their attachment to substrates. The presence of lipid globules in the ascospores may facilitate ascospore flotation.

The genus *Saccardoella* has been revised by Barr (1994) who produced a key to North American species. A key to all published species and a synopsis of characters is given (Table I), however *S. berberidis* Eliasson, *S. canadensis* Ellis & Everh. and *S. dehliana* are not included. Mathiasson (1993) concluded that the first two species are inseparable from *S. transsylvanica* (Rehm) Berl. We agree with Heish et al. (1997) that *S. dehliana* does not belong in this genus. In the description and illustration provided by Malhotra and Mukerji (1978), asci are typically loculoascomycetous.

### Key to *Saccardoella* Species

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LITERATURE CITED