

## ROPALOSPORA

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*Ropalospora* A.Massal., *Atti Reale Ist. Veneto Sci. Lett. Arti*, ser. 3, 5: 263 (1860), from the Greek *ροπαλον* (a club), referring to the distinctive shape of the ascospores which are broad at one end and taper at the other.

Type: *R. cafra* A.Massal. [= *R. lugubris* (Sommerf.) Poelt]

Thallus continuous to verrucose-areolate, smooth or rimose, pale to dark, sorediate or esorediate, usually with a conspicuous dark prothallus. Apothecia lecideine, brown to black, sessile, with a ±distinct persistent proper margin; disc epruinose. Excipulum hyaline or only faintly pigmented within, darker pigmented at the outer edge, composed of uniformly thickened radiating hyphae. Hypothecium hyaline to pale brown. Hymenium hyaline to pale brownish, with an olive-brown epihymenial zone. Paraphyses ±simple, with pigmented apices. Asci 8- or many-spored, of the *Teloschistes*-type but rather swollen in the upper part and with the ascoplasm rounded at the apex and not forming an ocular chamber. Ascospores transversely multiseptate, colourless, narrowly clavate-fusiform and with an attenuated 'beak' at the proximal end. Pycnidia sessile or immersed. Conidia bacilliform.

Chemistry: A broad range of compounds have been detected in this genus, including perlatolic, gyrophoric, usnic and aliphatic acids, as well as parietin and atranorin.

As presently circumscribed, *Ropalospora* contains five saxicolous or corticolous species and is found mainly in temperate parts of the Northern Hemisphere. One species is known from Australia.

*Ropalospora* has been considered as a distinct genus (e.g. Hafellner, 1984) or as synonym of *Fuscidea* (e.g. Purvis *et al.*, 1992); some of the constituent species have also been placed in *Bacidia*. Ekman (1993) discussed its distinguishing features, arguing that the genus differs from *Fuscidea* by its multiseptate ascospores as well as more subtle features of ascus and excipulum anatomy.

T. Tønsberg, The sorediate and isidiate, corticolous, crustose lichens in Norway, *Sommerfeltia* 14: 1–331 (1992); O.W.Purvis, L.H.Skjodahl & T.Tønsberg, *Fuscidea* V.Wirth & Vězda (1972), in O.W.Purvis, B.J.Coppins, D.L.Hawksworth, P.W.James & D.M.Moore (eds), *The Lichen Flora of Great Britain and Ireland* 251–256 (1992); S.Ekman, A taxonomic study of *Ropalospora chlorantha*, and a comparison between *Ropalospora* and *Fuscidea*, *Bryologist* 96: 582–591 (1993).