

Lichens from the Pruitt-Murray collection

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In the previous issue of *OMPHALINA* (vol. VIII, no. 1), we described how three boxes of unidentified lichen specimens came to the Agnes Marion Ayre Herbarium in St. John's, NL, who collected them, and why we were asked to identify the specimens fifty years later. Here we report our first three, all rather common, lichen specimens from the Pruitt-Murray collection.



Photo: Roger Smith



Photo: Andrus Voitk

Icmadophila ericetorum (L.) Zahlbr

Also called fairy puke or candy lichen and found on the 2016 HV-GB foray, *Icmadophila ericetorum* is a pale, mint-green, crustose lichen with light pink fruiting bodies (apothecia), the only species of its genus found in North America. It could be confused for *Dibaeis baeomyces*, but as pointed out by Jim Cornish, has flatter apothecia and prefers a rotting wood substrate.¹ *Icmadophila ericetorum* has two

secondary metabolites, thamnolic and perlatolic acid, which fluoresce under UV light. Fairy puke has been found on one of the oldest coastal Redwood giants, Terex Titan, observed over 27 meters up.²

Photos: Left, Pruitt-Murray collection; Middle, 2016 HV-GB foray; Right, in situ, Mt Ignoble, Western NL. Note variation in colour, and good preservation of the 50-year-old collection.

***Stereocaulon paschale* (L.) Hoffm.**

Stereocaulon is a genus of gray-white, shrub-like (fruticose) species with a solid stems (podetia), from which arise miniature leaf-like structures (phyllocladia), and gray-black granular clusters of cyanobacteria (cephalodia). *Stereocaulon paschale*, commonly called Easter foam lichen—also found on the 2016 HV-GB foray—is distinguished by foam-like clusters of phyllocladia. Distributed in the southern boreal region, it lives on soil and mossy rocks. This lichen makes two secondary metabolites, lobaric acid and atranorin, which have been studied for antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anticancer properties,³ as well as wound healing abilities.⁴

Photos: Upper, Pruitt-Murray collection; Lower, 2016 HV-GB foray. The fresh specimen shows apothecia (a), brown disc-like structures at podetial ends, where spores are produced, and cephalodia (c), black granular structures containing blue-green algae (cyanobacteria).

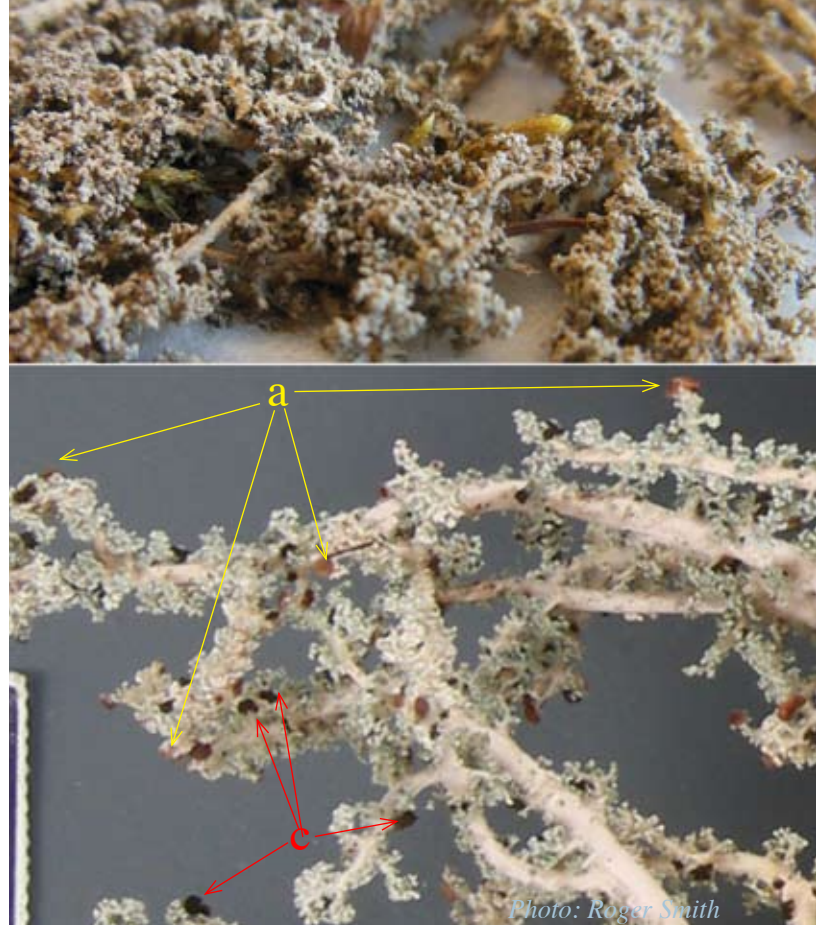


Photo: Roger Smith



Photo: Roger Smith



Photo: Andrus Voitk

***Vulpicida pinastri* (Scop.) J.-E. Mattsson & M. J. Lai**

Also called powdered sunshine lichen and found on the 2016 HV-GB foray, *Vulpicida pinastri* is a yellow leafy (foliose) lichen found mainly on conifer branches near the ground, but also on shrubs, wood, and rock. Its distinguishing features are small upturned greenish-yellow lobes, bright yellow edges, and a yellow inner layer (medulla). Because it produces a toxin, vulpinic acid, this lichen was used to poison foxes and wolves by being stuffed into animal bait carcasses, along with powdered glass.⁵ Vulpi + cida = fox + killer.

Photos: Left, Pruitt-Murray collection; Middle, 2016 HV-GB foray; Right, in situ, Central NL. Again, note good preservation of colour and characteristics of

dried specimen over 50 years.

References

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