

## DISEASE NOTE

**FIRST REPORT OF *MICROSPHAEROPSIS OLIVACEA* CAUSING BROWN SPINE ROT ON *ALHAGI MAURORUM* IN IRAN****P. Razaghi and D. Zafari***Department of Plant Pathology, Faculty of Agriculture, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamedan, Iran*

Camelthorn (*Alhagi maurorum*) is an importunate weed in cultivated fields and fallow lands in Iran. A disease at high severity level (69%) was observed on *A. maurorum* grown in arid area in Kermanshah province in September 2015. The disease was characterized by irregular brown lesions on the spines and profuse black pycnidia on aerially plant tissues. A *Microsphaeropsis* sp. was isolated from the lesions. The fungus was grown on oat meal agar (OA) at 24°C for seven days. Colonies of single-spore isolates were greenish brown with white aerial hyphae, had semi-immersed pycnidia in agar. Microscopic examination revealed that conidia were solitary, initially hyaline, becoming pale brown, 1-2-guttulate, ellipsoidal to subcylindrical with obtuse ends, straight to slightly curved, 0(-1) septate, (5-) 6-7 (-10.5) × 4-4.5 µm. The rDNA ITS was sequenced (GenBank accession No. KX171366) and found identical (99%) to sequences of *Microsphaeropsis olivacea* isolates. Pathogenicity of the isolates was confirmed by inoculating the healthy pinpricked spines with spore suspension (10<sup>6</sup> conidia/ml) or spraying with sterile distilled water as a control. Typical symptoms were produced on the inoculated spines after ten days. The pathogen was re-isolated from the infected spines while the controls remained symptomless. *M. olivacea* has been previously reported from *Pirus laricio*, and *Sarothamnus* sp. in Europe (Chen *et al.*, 2015). To our knowledge, this is the first record of *M. olivacea* as a causal agent of *A. maurorum* in Iran and worldwide, and may have a potential for biocontrol of the weed.

Chen Q., Jiang J.R., Zhang G.Z., Cai L., Crous P.W., 2015. Resolving the *Phoma* enigma. *Studies in Mycology* **82**: 137-217.

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**FIRST REPORT OF *PILIDIELLA GRANATI* CAUSING POSTHARVEST FRUIT ROT ON POMEGRANATE IN SOUTHERN ITALY****A. Mincuzzi, F. Garganese, A. Ippolito and S.M. Sanzani***Dipartimento di Scienze del Suolo, della Pianta e degli Alimenti, Università degli Studi Aldo Moro, Via Amendola 165/A, 70126 Bari, Italy*

In 2015, rot symptoms were observed during storage on pomegranate fruit (*Punica granatum* L.) cvs Wonderful and Mollar de Elche from a packinghouse in Apulia (Southern Italy). Symptoms, observed on 26% of fruit, consisted of circular brownish-yellow lesions, beginning in the crown area and quickly expanding to entire fruit, with softening of the tissues including arils. Tissue portions were cut from surface-sterilized fruit and incubated on semi-selective PDA at 28 ± 1°C in the dark. Colonies were white to creamy, leathery, and covered by abundant dark-greenish-brown to black spherical pycnidia (80-140 µm in diameter) with thin membranous walls. Hyphae were septate, and conidia hyaline, one-celled, 10-17.5 × 2-5 µm, ellipsoid to fusiform, straight or slightly curved. These characteristics corresponded to *Pilidiella granati* (Saccardo) (syn. *Coniella granati* Sacc.) Petr. & Syd.). For molecular confirmation, fungal DNA was amplified using universal primers ITS5/ITS4. BLAST analysis of the 506 bp amplicon (GenBank accession No. KU821701) showed 100% identity with other *P. granati* ITS sequences. For pathogenicity tests, surface-sterilized fruit of both cvs were wounded (5 × 5 mm), inoculated by a mycelial plug and incubated as reported above. Sterile plugs were used as controls. Lesions were visible after five days only on inoculated fruit. The re-isolated fungus corresponded to *P. granati*, which was reported as pomegranate postharvest rot agent in Spain (Palou *et al.*, 2010) and recently associated with a crown rot in Italy (Pollastro *et al.*, 2016). To our knowledge, this is the first report of *P. granati* rot on harvested pomegranate fruit in Southern Italy that might represent a serious threat for marketing of this promising crop.

Palou L., Guardado A., Montesinos-Herrero C., 2010. First report of *Penicillium* spp. and *Pilidiella granati* causing postharvest fruit rot of pomegranate in Spain. *New Disease Reports* **22**: 21.  
Pollastro S., Dongiovanni C., Gerin D., Pollastro P., Fumarola G., De Miccolis Angelini R.M., Faretra F., 2016. First Report of *Coniella granati* as a Causal Agent of Pomegranate Crown Rot in Southern Italy. *Plant Disease* **100**: 1498.

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