THE L&R GROUP

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Pithomyces, Stemphylium, and Ulocladium

Mitosporic ("mitosis" and "sporic") fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorph (sexual state): Leptosphaerulina (Ascomycete) and Pleospora (Ascomycete).

Characteristics

Distribution
Pithomyces: Approx. 15 species.
Stemphylium: Approx. 6 speicies.
Ulocladium: Approx. 9 speicies.

Where Found
Common on dead leaves of more than 50 different plants, especially leaf fodders. Soil, grasses. Some species found on leaves are plant pathogens.

Mode of Dissemination
Dry spore. Wind.

Growth Indoors
Rarely found growing indoors. Can grow on paper. Spores require a high moisture content.

Industrial Uses
Not known.

Other Comments
Pithomyces chartarum is one of the causes of facial eczema in sheep in New Zealand.
Stemphylium is commonly found on plant materials (tomato, pear, cherry, pomaceous and stone fruit).

Potential Health Effects

Allergens
Known allergen. Shares allergens with Alternaria. Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma). Considered by some to be the most common mold allergens.

Potential Opportunist or Pathogen
A rare report of phaeohyphomycotic sinusitis (identification questionable).

Potential Toxin Production
Pithomyces produce Sporidesmin an organic heteropentacycilic compound.

Laboratory Notes

Growth/Culture Characteristics
Grows readily on general fungal media; sporulation may be slow and may require a "light/dark cycle." Colonies are shades of tan to brown.

Spore Trap Recognition
Distinctive multicelled, brown conidia of Pithomyces chartarum are recognizable on spore trap slides. Young spores or spore fragments may be confused with Alternaria, Pithomyces, and others, although Alternaria usually has shades of olive-green pigment.