

Verrucaria corallensis P.M.McCarthy

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T: Rocky Point, 13 km NE of Mossman, 16°23'06"S, 145°25'01"E, on wave-splashed (at high-water) intertidal sandstone, 1 Aug. 2006, P.M.McCarthy 2651; holo: CANB.

Illustration: P.M.McCarthy, op. cit. 19, fig. 1.

Thallus epilithic, effuse to determinate, c. 5–20 mm wide, medium greyish green to greenish black or greyish black, ±smooth, continuous or very sparingly rimose, 20–40 (–50) µm thick, becoming greener and gelatinous when wetted, with sparse to very numerous black orbicular to oval punctae 15–40 µm wide, or the punctae coalescing to form simple, branched or anastomosing jugae, these 25–50 µm wide and acutely ridged or flat-topped. Cortex absent. Algal cells green, in irregular columns, vertically slightly elongate, 4–8 × 3–5 (–6) µm. Prothallus absent; blackened basal layer present and discontinuous (punctae and jugae) or absent. Perithecia semi-immersed to almost superficial, mostly hemispherical, occasionally convex, subglobose or moderately to grossly distorted, (0.17–) 0.23 (–0.30) mm diam., usually dull black, occasionally glossy, not overgrown by the thallus. Perithecial apex smooth and rounded, or with an uneven surface. Ostiole inconspicuous or, commonly, in a crater-like 20–40 µm diam. depression. Involucrellum greenish black in thin section, extending down to exciple base level, 35–60 µm thick at the base. Centrum 0.10–0.17 mm wide. Exciple 10–15 µm thick, with a greenish black outer zone and a hyaline to pale greenish inner zone. Periphyses 15–20 × 1.0–1.5 µm. Asci clavate to cylindroclavate, 35–44 × 10–16 µm. Ascospores narrowly ellipsoidal to short-fusiform, or more elongate and with the distal or both ends rounded, massed in the ascus, (13–) 16.5 (–20) × (3.5–) 4.2 (–5.0) µm.

Known only from intertidal rock outcrops at the type locality in north-eastern Qld.

Verrucaria corallensis is characterised by the very thin, green to blackish thallus with minute, carbonaceous dots and ridges, small but prominent perithecia and unusually elongate ascospores.

Intertidal species of *Verrucaria* appear to be very uncommon in the tropics, presumably due to their inability to tolerate the extremes of saturation and desiccation on tropical coasts, possibly further complicated by daily wet-season downpours of rainwater.

