



## *Chaenotheca meridionalis*, a new calicioid lichen from Australasia

Gintaras Kantvilas<sup>1</sup>, Sanja Tibell<sup>2</sup>, Leif Tibell<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tasmanian Herbarium, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Box 5058, UTAS LPO, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, Australia 7005. Email: Gintaras.Kantvilas@tmag.tas.gov.au, corresponding author

<sup>2</sup> Independent researcher, Uppsala, Sweden. Email: sanja.tibell@gmail.com <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4143-9856>

<sup>3</sup> Department of Organismal Biology, Evolutionary Biology Centre, Uppsala University, Norbyvägen 18D, 75236 Uppsala, Sweden. Email: leif.tibell@ebc.uu.se

### Abstract

*Chaenotheca meridionalis* Tibell & Kantvilas is described as new, based on morphological characters and ITS-based phylogenetic data. Maximum Likelihood analysis was run on 62 taxa and four *C. meridionalis* sequences received maximum Ultrafast bootstrap support within the strongly supported 'chrysocephala' group. *Chaenotheca meridionalis* differs from its close relative, *C. chlorella*, by its taller apothecia, 1.04–2.04 mm high, versus 0.71–0.94 mm in *C. chlorella*, and wider ascospores, 3.25–4.75 µm versus 2.89–3.81 µm in *C. chlorella*. It inhabits decorticated wood in temperate forests and is widely distributed in Australasia.

**Key words:** biodiversity, Coniocybomyces, lichenised fungi, new species, molecular taxonomy

### Introduction

*Chaenotheca* (Th.Fr.) Th.Fr. is a genus of calicioid lichens, classified in the Coniocybomyces by Prieto & Wedin (2013). It was revised by Tibell (1980) and has since been included in numerous regional revisions of calicioid lichens (Tibell 1981, 1982, 1999, 2001; Tibell & Ryan 2004), including those of Australasia (Tibell 1987). In many areas of the world, certain species of *Chaenotheca* have been found in habitats with long forest continuity (Tibell 1992; Selva 1996; Maloof 2016; Kantvilas & Jarman 2012) and, as a result, several have been included in Red Lists of various countries. However, many taxonomic problems remain in the genus and additional species continue to be described, even from relatively well-explored areas. Examples include *C. balsamconensis* J.L.Allen & McMullin (Allen & McMullin 2015) [= *Chaenotricha obscura* (G. Merr.) Suija, McMullin & P. Lohmus] and *C. longispora* Reese Næsborg & Tibell (Reese Næsborg *et al.* 2019) from North America, and *C. biesboschii* Tibell & van der Pluijm (Tibell *et al.* 2019) from Europe. A rich diversity of species, some of which are undescribed, has also been discovered in the Himalayas (L.T., unpublished results), and further undescribed species are known from Australia and New Zealand. In this paper, the majority of the material from Australasia that was previously identified as *C. carthusiae* (Harm.) Lettau [= *C. chlorella* (Ach.) Müll.Arg.]) by

Tibell (1987) is shown to belong to a new species, here described as *C. meridionalis*.

## Material and methods

### Material

Material was collected from many parts of New Zealand and Australia (mostly by LT, originally identified as *C. carthusiae* and lodged in UPS; see Tibell 1987) and, more recently, from Tasmania by GK (lodged in HO). Occasional collections from other sources were also studied. For comparisons, the following specimens of *C. chlorella* (all in UPS) were used: *Tibell 16867* (Uppland, Sweden), *Tibell 17106* (Jämtland, Sweden), *Tibell 21053* (Uppland, Sweden) and *Tibell 17889* (Uppland, Sweden). For establishing a detailed phylogeny, 60 ITS sequences of 24 species of *Chaenotheca* and *Coniocybe* from 16 countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and North and South America (Table 1) were used.

### Methods

Mature apothecia were sectioned longitudinally with a freezing microtome, using a 5% solution of gum arabic as the embedding medium. Forty mature ascospores were randomly selected and measured. Statistical estimates are given in the following format: A-B ( $X = ; sd = ; n = ; N =$ ), where A is X minus one sd, B is X plus one sd, X is the arithmetic mean, sd is the standard deviation, n is the number of observations per collection (40) and N is the number of collections measured (4).

### DNA extraction and sequencing

Material for DNA extraction was obtained either from fresh material or from cultures 10–15 years old, stored in a refrigerator at +4°. The cultures were obtained from fresh material after plating ascospores on MYE medium. The culture material was immersed in liquid nitrogen and crushed with a small pestle. For recently collected material, carefully selected apothecia were used for the isolation. The DNeasy Plant Mini Kit (Qiagen) was used for isolating total DNA following the instructions of the manufacturer. Diluted (1:10) or undiluted DNA was used for PCR amplifications with AccuPower® PCR PreMix (Bioneer) adding 3 µl of DNA extraction, 1.5 µl of each primer (10 µM) and water to a total volume of 20 µl.

Primers used were for the nucITS were ITS1f (Gardes

& Bruns 1993) and ITS 4 (White *et al.* 1990). Thermal cycling parameters were: initial denaturation for 4 min at 95°C, followed by 35 cycles of 1 min at 94°C, 1 min at 54°C and 45 secs at 72°C, and final elongation for 5 mins at 72°C. Amplification products were visualized on 0.5% agarose gels stained with GelRed. The product was cleaned with Illustra™ExoProStar (Thermo Fisher Scientific) following the protocol of the manufacturer. The DNA amplification product was sequenced in both directions by using the above mentioned primers also as sequencing primers (5 µM). Sequencing, automated reaction clean up and visualization were carried out as described by MacroGen Inc. (www.macrogen.com).

### Alignments and phylogenetic analyses

Newly generated ITS sequences of *Chaenotheca* were aligned together with a wide selection of *Chaenotheca* and *Coniocybe* sequences downloaded from GenBank (Table 1) by MAFFT v.7 (Kuraku *et al.* 2013; Katoh *et al.* 2019) on an online server (<http://mafft.cbrc.jp/alignment/server/>). An alignment was created utilizing the L-INS-i iterative refinement method and using the default settings (gap opening penalty = 1.53 and offset value = 0.0). The alignment was manually edited using AliView (Larsson 2014). The alignment comprises 62 sequences with 575 columns (351 distinct patterns, 251 parsimony-informative, 55 singleton sites and 269 constant sites), representing *Chaenotheca* and *Coniocybe* species; as outgroup, two sequences of *Sclerophora farinacea* (Chevall.) Chevall. were chosen based on the phylogeny presented by Tibell *et al.* (2019).

Maximum-Likelihood (ML) Phylogenetic relationships were inferred using the IQ-TREE web server (<http://iqtree.cibiv.univie.ac.at/>; Trifinopoulos *et al.* 2016). Prior to the ML analysis, model selection was performed on the same server, with no partition of ITS data; for all three Information Criteria (Akaike, Corrected Akaike and Bayesian) the same best-fit model SYM+I+G4 was identified. ML tree reconstruction (Nguyen *et al.* 2015) was combined with branch support using ultrafast bootstrap (UFBoot) with 2000 replicates implemented in IQ-TREE (Hoang *et al.* 2017), where a UFBoot  $\geq 95\%$  was considered as strong support. Additional support metrics (SH-aLRT and aBayes) were also calculated, although they were well in line with UFBoot values, and thus not shown.

Phylogenetic trees were visualized using FigTree



v1.4.3 (Rambaut 2012). Inkscape v. 1.4.2. (<https://inkscape.org/>), a free software and open-source vector graphics editor, was used for artwork.

## Results

Analyses were based on a total of 62 ITS sequences, representing 21 species of *Chaenotheca* and three species of *Coniocybe* (Table 1), with two sequences of *Sclerophora farinacea* as outgroup (Fig. 1). Four sequences of *Chaenotheca meridionalis*, three from New Zealand and one from Australia, form a strongly supported clade (UFBoot=100%) in the phylogeny (Fig. 1), and are part of a clade (UFBoot=99%) that was referred to as the 'chrysocephala' group in Tibell *et al.* (2019).

## Taxonomy

***Chaenotheca meridionalis* Tibell & Kantvilas, *sp. nov.***

**Mycobank no.: MB 863509**

Similar to *Chaenotheca chlorella* (Ach) Müll.Arg., with which it shares a yellow pruina and a *Stichococcus s.lat.* (henceforth referred to as just '*Stichococcus*') photobiont, but differing by the taller apothecia, 1.04–2.04 mm high, and the ascospores being 4.03–6.03 × 3.25–4.75 µm (wider than in *C. chlorella*).

**Type: AUSTRALIA:** Tasmania, along Lyell Highway, c. 3 km north of Wyatinah, 42°22'S, 146°30'E, on lignum of fire-scarred *Eucalyptus regnans* at the edge of an *Atherosperma*-dominated gully, 400 m elevation., 25 Oct. 1998, G. Kantvilas 213/98 (holo: HO 328962; iso: UPS).

*Thallus* immersed to superficial, pale glaucous green, developing small, lumpy, ecorticate patches with a minutely roughened surface. *Photobiont* *Stichococcus*. *Apothecia* 1.04–2.04 mm high ( $X=1.54$  mm;  $sd=0.50$  mm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ), with slender, flexuose stalks; *stalks* 0.037–0.073 mm diam. ( $X=0.055$  mm;  $sd=0.018$  mm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ), black, epruinose or with a citrine yellow pruina in the upper part; *capitulum* 0.14–0.29 mm diam. ( $X=0.21$  mm;  $sd=0.08$  mm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ), lenticular to spherical, with a well-developed excipulum; *excipulum* short, collar-shaped, consisting of periclinally arranged, intertwined hyphae, covered on the lower side by a yellow pruina; *paraphyses* branched, < 1 µm diam.; *asci* single, cylindrical, 14.7–18.5 ( $X=16.6$  µm,  $sd=1.9$  µm,

$N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ) × 1.8–2.4 ( $X=2.13$  µm,  $sd=0.31$  µm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ), well-stalked and arising from croziers; *ascospores* medium brown, 4.03–6.03 µm ( $X=5.03$  µm,  $sd=1.00$  µm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ) long and 3.25–4.75 µm wide ( $X=4.00$  µm;  $sd=0.75$  µm,  $N=4$ ,  $n=40$ ), ornamented with coarse, irregular cracks. *Secondary chemistry:* the yellow pruina consists of vulpinic acid. Fig. 2.

## Etymology

The specific epithet, meaning 'southern', alludes to the geographic distribution of the new species.

## Habitat and distribution

The new species occurs in dry, sheltered recesses on the lignum of large, dead trees in wet forests, a habitat favoured by many calicioid lichens in Australia (e.g. see Tibell 1987, Kantvilas & Jarman 2004) as well as in the Northern Hemisphere (Tibell 1992). Although herbarium specimens suggest that the preferred host is *Eucalyptus*, *Chaenotheca meridionalis* has also been collected from dead *Leptospermum*, dead *Phyllocladus*, the dead, woody basidiocarp of a bracket fungus attached to an old *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, and old, dead, dry leaves of *Richea pandanifolia* that are retained as a collar on the living plant. Thus, its apparent predilection for *Eucalyptus* is more a case of this tree providing the physically largest host and having lignum that is stable and long-lived. In New Zealand, it mainly occurs on lignum of *Nothofagus* and podocarps. The distribution of the species is illustrated by Tibell (1987) under the name *C. carthusiae*, and its habitat ecology is also discussed there (p. 82). The habitat of the related *C. chlorella* is generally similar, although this species is more often found on the bark of living trees.

## Specimens examined

The restudying of the material cited by Tibell (1987) as *C. carthusiae* revealed that most specimens belong to *C. meridionalis*. Thus, in the list below, these specimens are referred to solely by their collection number and only additional records are cited in full. *Chaenotheca meridionalis* has so far been recorded from 25 localities presented in the list below.

**AUSTRALIA: Australian Capital Territory:** Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, 29 km SSW of Cotter Dam, Red Hill Trail, 35°29'S 148°52'E., 900m, 1981, L. Tibell

11900 (UPS); also *L. Tibell* 11877, 11945 (UPS). **New South Wales:** Lowden Forest Park, 14 km ENE of Majors Creek, 35°31'S, 149°36'E, c. 900 m, 1981, *L. Tibell* 11968 (UPS); also *L. Tibell* 12006, 12309 (UPS). **Victoria:** Healesville, Corranderrk Sandways, 1974, *R. Filson* 15009 (UPS); Errinundra National Park, 13 km SE of Bendoc, 37°14'S 148°58'E, 860 m, 1990, *M. Wedin* 3346, 3348 (UPS); near Caveat, junction of Molesworth and Highlands roads, 37°07'S 145°29'E, 860 m, 1981. *H. Streiman* (UPS); also *L. Tibell* 11728a, 11736, 11764, 11774, 11798, 11821, 11830 (UPS). **Tasmania:** Anthony Road, 41°50'S 145°38'E, 1991, *G. Kantvilas* 247/91 (UPS); Mt. Field National Park, 8.5 km N of Maydena, outlet of Lake Fenton, 42°40'S 146°37'E, c. 1000 m, 1981, *L. Tibell* 11141 (UPS); Fern Tree, Bower Track, 42°55'S 147°16'E, 450 m, 1981, *R.D. Seppelt* 11420

(HO); Myrtle Forest, Collinsvale, 42°52'S 146°35'E, 1981, *G. Kantvilas* 128/81 & *L. Tibell* (HO); Yarrington Tier, 42°32'S 147°18'E, 620 m, 1987, *G. Kantvilas* 99/87 (HO); Warra Creek, 43°05'S 146°43'E, 175 m, 1996, *G. Kantvilas* s.n. (HO); Hartz Mountain Road, 43°12'S 146°46'E, 560 m., 1998, *G. Kantvilas* 199/90 (HO, UPS); near Mossy Marsh Canal, 3.5 km SW of Tarraleah, 42°18'S 146°24'E, 650 m, 1998, *G. Kantvilas* 211/98 (HO, UPS); 2 km SW Renison Bell, along forestry road to Argent Dam, 1992, *Wedin* 4298 (UPS); also *L. Tibell* 10974, 10995, 11057, 11096, 11120, 11180, 11365, 11371; *R. Filson* 15009 (all UPS). **Western Australia:** Beedelup National Park, 15 km W of Pemberton, at Beedelup Falls, 34°25'S 115°52'E., 120m, 1981, *L. Tibell* 14004, 14012 (UPS); Porongurup National Park, 21 km ESE of Mt Barker, 34°41'S 117°53'E., 520m,

**Table 1. ITS sequences used in the phylogenetic analysis, together with their GenBank Accession numbers. New sequences in bold.**

|    | Species                              | Country        | Isolation | Voucher              | GB number |
|----|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1  | <i>Chaenotheca biesboschii</i>       | Netherlands    | L378      | A. v. d. Pluijm 3130 | MK514538  |
| 2  | <i>Chaenotheca biesboschii</i>       | Netherlands    | L380      | A. v. d. Pluijm 3244 | MK514539  |
| 3  | <i>Chaenotheca brunneola</i>         | Sweden         | T056      | Tibell 22202 (UPS)   | AF297964  |
| 4  | <i>Chaenotheca brunneola</i>         | Canada         |           | CCDB-33187-G08       | OQ843252  |
| 5  | <i>Chaenotheca brunneola</i>         | Czech Republic |           | PRA-Vondrak24672     | OQ717787  |
| 6  | <i>Chaenotheca brunneola</i>         | Estonia        | T056      | TU<EST>:76415        | KX348127  |
| 7  | <i>Chaenotheca chlorella</i>         | Czech Republic |           | PRA-Vondrak24769     | OQ717788  |
| 8  | <i>Chaenotheca chlorella</i>         | Estonia        | T161      | Tibell 22372 (UPS)   | AF445356  |
| 9  | <i>Chaenotheca chlorella</i>         | Sweden         | T080      | Tibell 22187 (UPS)   | AF297966  |
| 10 | <i>Chaenotheca chrysocephala</i>     | Austria        |           | PRA-Vondrak 26008    | OQ717362  |
| 11 | <i>Chaenotheca chrysocephala</i>     | Sweden         | T057      | Tibell 22162         | AF298120  |
| 12 | <i>Chaenotheca chrysocephala</i>     | Sweden         | T085      | Tibell 21799 (UPS)   | AF298121  |
| 13 | <i>Chaenotheca cinerea</i>           | Estonia        |           | TU<EST>:39194        | KX348119  |
| 14 | <i>Chaenotheca cinerea</i>           | Estonia        | T163      | Tibell 22374 (UPS)   | AF421201  |
| 15 | <i>Chaenotheca cinerea</i>           | Sweden         | T089      | Jonsson& Nordin s.n. | AF298122  |
| 16 | <i>Chaenotheca deludens</i>          | New Zealand    | T106      | T. 16575; UPSC2454   | AF408678  |
| 17 | <i>Chaenotheca ferruginea</i>        | Czech Republic |           | PRA-Vondrak24394     | OQ717789  |
| 18 | <i>Chaenotheca ferruginea</i>        | Sweden         | T099      | Tibell 22276 (UPS)   | AF298123  |
| 19 | <b><i>Chaenotheca ferruginea</i></b> | India          | T865      | Tibell 23334 (UPS)   | new       |
| 20 | <i>Chaenotheca gracilenta</i>        | Sweden         | T055      | T. 22197 (UPS)       | AF410675  |
| 21 | <i>Chaenotheca gracilenta</i>        | Estonia        |           | TU<EST>:30149        | KX348118  |
| 22 | <i>Chaenotheca gracillima</i>        | Chile          | T008      | Tibell 17943 (UPS)   | AF298126  |
| 23 | <b><i>Chaenotheca gracillima</i></b> | New Zealand    | T222      | T. 16575; UPSC2300   | new       |
| 24 | <i>Chaenotheca gracillima</i>        | Sweden         | T037      | Tibell 17052 (UPS)   | AF298127  |
| 25 | <i>Chaenotheca nepalensis</i>        | India          | T093      | Tibell 21900 (UPS)   | AF298128  |
| 26 | <b><i>Chaenotheca hispidula</i></b>  | China          | T192      | Titov 6691B          | new       |
| 27 | <i>Chaenotheca hispidula</i>         | Latvia         | CH361     | TUF051093            | OR661707  |
| 28 | <i>Chaenotheca hispidula</i>         | Czech Republic |           | PRA-Vondrak24330     | OQ717792  |
| 29 | <i>Chaenotheca hygrophila</i>        | Japan          | T024      | Thor 15612           | AF298129  |
| 30 | <b><i>Chaenotheca laevigata</i></b>  | Estonia        | T159      | Tibell 22368         | new       |

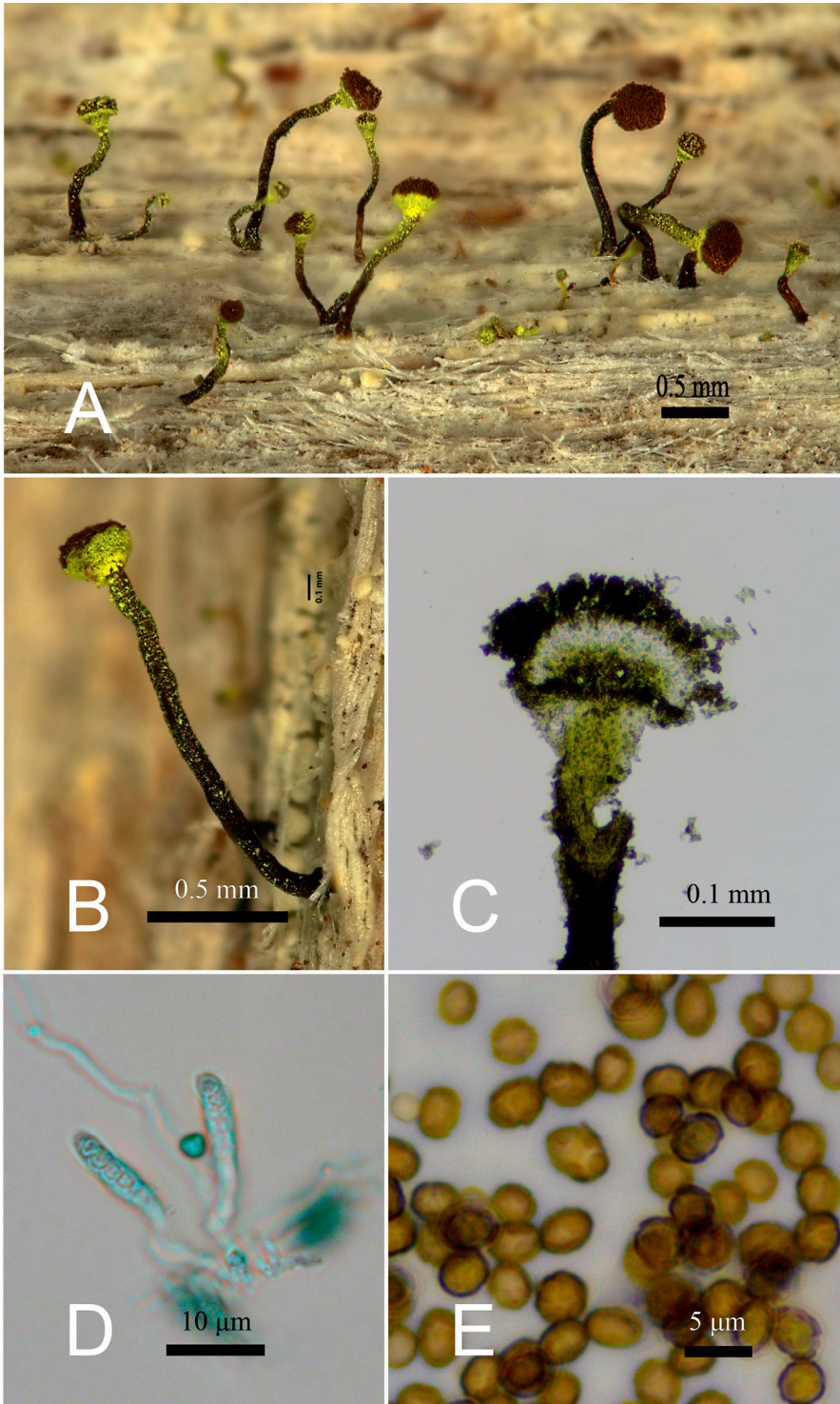
1983, *L. Tibell 14154* (UPS); Walpole National Park, 8 km NE of Walpole, Tingle Drive, 34°58'S 116°48'E., 760m, 1983, *L. Tibell 14055* (UPS). **NEW ZEALAND: Canterbury:** Awa Awa Reserve, 11.3 km NW of Methven, 43°34'S 171°32'E, 530 m, 1980, *L. Tibell 9892* (UPS); also *L. Tibell 9051, 9056, 9129b, 9178, 9523, 9634, 9755, 9892, 10024, 10944* (all UPS). **North Auckland:** Waivera Hill Scenic Reserve, 4.5 km NNE of Orewa, 36°33'S 174°43'E, c. 60 m, 1986, *L. Tibell 16700* (UPS); *L. Tibell 13391, 14895, 16709* (all UPS). **Gisborne:** Taupo-Napier Rd, near Tarawera, 39°02'S 176°32'E, 1982, *J. Bartlett 18367* (UPS); 1.8 km SE of Waikaremoana, along Ngamoko Track, 38°46'S 117°10'E, 1050 m, 1992, *L. Tibell 19421* (UPS); also *L. Tibell 13009, 19408* (UPS). **Nelson:** Nelson Lakes National Park, Lake Rotoiti, 1.5 km SSE of St. Arnaud, along St. Arnaud

Track, *L. Tibell 19061* (UPS); also *L. Tibell 13677, 13769* (UPS). **Otago:** *L. Tibell 10205, 10289, 10581* (UPS). **South Auckland:** Wairare Falls Scenic Reserve, Kaimai Range, 1 km NE of Matamata, 300 m, 1992, *M. Wedin 3973* (UPS); near Tarawea 39°02'S 176°32'E, c. 550 m, 1982, *J. Bartlett 18767* (UPS). **Southland:** *L. Tibell 10373, 10387, 10391, 10501* (all UPS). **Taranaki:** Tongariro National Park, along Ohakune Mountain Road, 3 km NE of Ohakune, 1990, *L. Tibell 18972* (UPS).

## Discussion

Our phylogeny recovered the groups variously identified and nick-named by Tibell *et al.* (2019). The morphology of *Chaenotheca meridionalis*, initially reported and illustrated from Australia and New

|    |  |             |      |                                    |                          |
|----|--|-------------|------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 31 | <b><i>Chaenotheca meridionalis</i></b>   | Australia   | T112 | Kantvilas 213/98                   | <b>new</b>               |
| 32 | <b><i>Chaenotheca meridionalis</i></b>   | New Zealand | T031 | Tibell 16700; UPSC2196; CBS 100902 | <b>new</b>               |
| 33 | <b><i>Chaenotheca meridionalis</i></b>   | New Zealand | T032 | Tibell 16700; UPSC2073; CBS 113821 | <b>new</b>               |
| 34 | <b><i>Chaenotheca meridionalis</i></b>   | New Zealand | T229 | T. 18972                           | <b>new</b>               |
| 35 | <i>Chaenotheca nitidula</i>              | Canada      | T182 | Koffman 222 (UPS)                  | AF492386                 |
| 36 | <b><i>Chaenotheca nitidula</i></b>       | India       | T881 | Tibell 23357 (UPS)                 | <b>new</b>               |
| 37 | <i>Chaenotheca nitidula</i>              | USA         | T290 | T. 21490                           | AF492388                 |
| 38 | <i>Chaenotheca phaeocephala</i>          | Sweden      | T001 | Hermansson 8290 (UPS)              | AF445358                 |
| 39 | <i>Chaenotheca phaeocephala</i>          | Sweden      | T010 | Tibell 16885 (UPS)                 | AF298132                 |
| 40 | <b><i>Chaenotheca sphaerocephala</i></b> | Sweden      | T125 | Herm. 4/6/00 (UPS)                 | <b>new</b>               |
| 41 | <b><i>Chaenotheca sphaerocephala</i></b> | Sweden      | T273 | Koffman 010823 (UPS)               | <b>new</b>               |
| 42 | <i>Chaenotheca stemonea</i>              | Sweden      | T115 | Tibell 22191 (UPS)                 | AF408683                 |
| 43 | <i>Chaenotheca stemonea</i>              | Switzerland |      | LIFU098-16 (versC)                 | KX133006                 |
| 44 | <i>Chaenotheca subroscida</i>            | Sweden      | T050 | Tibell 22150                       | AF298136                 |
| 45 | <i>Chaenotheca subroscida</i>            | Sweden      | T064 | Tibell 22167                       | AF446047                 |
| 46 | <i>Chaenotheca trichialis</i>            | Sweden      | T130 | T. 22355                           | AF410674                 |
| 47 | <i>Chaenotheca trichialis</i>            | India       | T151 | Tibell 22090 (UPS)                 | AF421205                 |
| 48 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | Argentina   | T011 | Tibell 18431                       | AF298138                 |
| 49 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | Sweden      | T131 | Tibell 22361 (UPS)                 | AF421211                 |
| 50 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | Sweden      | T181 | Tibell 22329 (UPS)                 | AF421212                 |
| 51 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | Canada      | T188 | Selva 7753 (UMFK)                  | AF421213                 |
| 52 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | New Zealand | T006 | Tibell 16673 (UPS)                 | AF421208                 |
| 53 | <i>Chaenotheca xyloxena</i>              | New Zealand | T028 | Tibell 16605 (UPS)                 | AF421209                 |
| 54 | <i>Coniocybe brachypoda</i>              | Sweden      | T030 | Tibell 17062                       | AF297962                 |
| 55 | <i>Coniocybe brachypoda</i>              | New Zealand | T027 | Tibell 16627                       | PP741625                 |
| 56 | <i>Coniocybe eufuracea</i>               | Japan       | T036 | Thor 15698                         | AF298124 as 'furfuracea' |
| 57 | <i>Coniocybe eufuracea</i>               | Sweden      | T081 | Wedin 6366 (UPS)                   | AF298125                 |
| 58 | <b><i>Coniocybe eufuracea</i></b>        | Canada      | T439 | Koffman 387 (UPS)                  | <b>new</b>               |
| 59 | <i>Coniocybe furfuracea</i>              | Sweden      | T155 | Tibell 22364                       | AF445357                 |
| 60 | <i>Coniocybe furfuracea</i>              | Switzerland |      | WSL:DF252                          | KX098351                 |
| 61 | <i>Sclerophora farinacea</i>             | unknown     |      | Wedin 6414 (UPS)                   | JX000113                 |
| 62 | <i>Sclerophora farinacea</i>             | Estonia     |      | Tibell 22373 (UPS)                 | AF410677                 |



**Figure 2.** *Chaenotheca meridionalis*. A-B: ascomata, habit; C: ascomata, longitudinal section; D: asci; E: ascospores.

Zealand under the name *C. carthusiae* by Tibell (1987), indicates that it belongs to the 'chrysocephala' group. Its placement there was confirmed by our ITS-based phylogenetic analyses (Fig. 1) of a wide representation of the infrageneric variation in *Chaenotheca*. The monophyly of *C. meridionalis* is strongly supported (Fig. 1) and it forms the sistergroup to a clade comprising *C. chlorella* and *C. laevigata* Nád. However, in pairwise comparisons, the analysis also reveals considerable differences between the New Zealand collections and the type from Tasmania (23–27 bps). This might indicate that *C. meridionalis* as described here includes two closely related but morphologically very similar species, but to further elucidate the relationships between these two putative subclades, a much wider sampling of molecular sequences is needed, and that is beyond the aim and resources of this paper. *Chaenotheca meridionalis* is in the ITS region characterized by 'signature sequences' (Tibell 2006); that is, sequences unique to *C. meridionalis* as compared to the 59 sequences representing 21 other species of *Chaenotheca* (Table 1): CATTATCGAGTGC GGTCCTCTG (ITS1); GGGGCGTGCCCC (ITS1); TGCTGTCTGAGCAA (ITS1), and GGACTCCCGTC (ITS2).

The new species displays the salient morphological features of this group, such as having stalked, yellow-pruinose apothecia with a brown mazaedium on a crustose thallus, and is morphologically most similar to *C. chlorella* in that both species have a yellow pruina. However, they differ in *C. meridionalis* having taller apothecia, 1.04–2.04 mm, with flexuous stalks (see Tibell 1987: Fig. 10, and our Figs. 2 A-B) versus 0.71–0.94 mm in *C. chlorella*, and wider ascospores, 3.25–4.75 µm versus 2.89–3.81 µm in *C. chlorella*. In *C. chlorella*, the stalks are thus comparatively short and straight (illustrated in Tibell 1999: 83). For a comparison of apothecium and spore sizes, the following estimates were obtained from four specimens of *C. chlorella* (see 'Material' above): apothecium height = 0.71–0.94 mm (X=0.82 mm; sd=0.12, N=4, n=40); ascospore length: 4.4–6.3 µm (X=5.34 µm; sd=1.00 µm, N=4, n=40); ascospore width: 2.89–3.81 µm (X=3.35 µm; sd=0.46 µm, N=4, n=40); ascospore length/width ratio = 1.59 (compared to 1.26 for *C. meridionalis*). There is also a difference in thallus morphology with *C. chlorella* having a verrucose to subsquamulose thallus with a distinct cortex, whereas

in *C. meridionalis*, the thallus is immersed or develops in small, lumpy patches with a minutely roughened, ecorticate surface.

Several additional, calicioid taxa in the Australasian lichen biota also have yellow-pruinose apothecial stalks: *C. chrysocephala* (Ach.) Th.Fr. differs by having a conspicuous thallus of coarse, bright yellow granules; *C. hispidula* (Ach.) Zahlbr. differs by having a *Trentepohlia* photobiont and apothecial stalks to 1 mm tall. There is also *Coniocybe confusa* (Tibell) Tibell & Temu, which has a farinose to granular, greenish yellow thallus and apothecia that lack a well-developed excipulum.

Numerous taxonomic problems in *Chaenotheca* remain, and a detailed investigation of its taxonomy is underway (by LT and ST).

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