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► **To cite this version:**

Nicolas Küffer, François Gillet, Béatrice Senn-Irlet, Daniel Job, Michel Aragno. Ecological determinants of fungal diversity on dead wood in European forests. *Fungal Diversity*, 2008, 30, pp.83-95. hal-00357745

**HAL Id: hal-00357745**

**<https://hal.science/hal-00357745>**

Submitted on 18 Feb 2009

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1 **Ecological determinants of fungal diversity on dead wood in**  
2 **European forests**

3

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13

14

15 **Abstract**

16 The fine-scale ecological determinants for wood-inhabiting aphylophoroid basidiomycetes  
17 were investigated with statistical analyses of the occurrence of fruit bodies on woody debris  
18 collected in Switzerland and Ukraine. Three substrate descriptors were considered: diameter,  
19 degree of decomposition and host tree species.

20 By means of Multiple Regression Trees, thresholds in the response of fungal communities to  
21 these local environmental descriptors were detected. Three classes for diameter, as well as for  
22 degree of decomposition were thus delimited. They revealed the importance of very small sizes,  
23 which were not reported in the literature so far: the relevant diameter class limits were about  
24 0.72 cm and 1.35 cm. Within the host tree species, a clear distinction between coniferous and  
25 broadleaf species was found. The next splits followed rather climatic determinants of tree  
26 distribution than taxonomical entities such as families or genera.

27 The fidelity of the 59 fungal species to diameter classes, decomposition classes and host tree  
28 species was measured by the Dufrière-Legendre index and only significant responses after  
29 permutation tests were retained. This brought new insights on the ecology of many wood-  
30 inhabiting aphylophoroid basidiomycetes.

31 Redundancy Analysis was applied to investigate the response of fungal species to diameter and  
32 degree of decomposition of woody debris from the most common host tree species, *Fagus*

1 *sylvatica*. This direct gradient analysis made it possible to reconstruct the succession of fungal  
2 species along the wood decomposition process.

3

4 **Keywords:** basidiomycetes, decomposition, diameter, fungal ecology, host tree species, woody  
5 debris

6

## 7 **Introduction**

8 Fungi play important roles in the forest ecosystems. They are the principal  
9 decomposers of dead organic matter, such as dead wood and litter. Secondly, most of the tree  
10 species depend on mycorrhizal symbiosis with fungal species (Smith and Read, 1997).

11 For the saprotrophic fungi, dead wood is one of the most important substrates in European  
12 forests. Actually, dead wood may be called a key factor for biodiversity and functioning of the  
13 temperate and boreal forests in Europe, as it provides substrate and shelter for many different  
14 organisms, such as insects, birds, small mammals or fungi (e.g. Harmon et al., 1986; Primack,  
15 2002). Among the wood-decomposing fungi, the aphyllorphoroid species are a major group,  
16 regarding the importance for forest ecosystem functioning (Swift, 1982) as well as species  
17 richness (Ryvarden and Gilbertsen, 1993, 1994; Hjortstam, 1997; Ginns, 1998).

18 In this study, we focus on two groups of aphyllorphoroid wood-inhabiting fungi: the  
19 corticioid and poroid basidiomycetes. Among them, two ecological groups of fungi are  
20 traditionally distinguished: saprotrophic and mycorrhizal species.

21 Corticioid and poroid fungal species are among the most important wood decomposing  
22 fungi (Swift, 1982). As a general rule, the majority of the corticioid species perform white rot  
23 wood decomposition, i.e. they decompose both the lignin and holocellulose wood components,  
24 whereas the poroid species rather prefer the brown rot decomposition type, as they decompose  
25 only the holocellulose wood components (Boddy and Rayner, 1988; Dix and Webster, 1995).

26 The corticioid mycorrhizal species discussed here belong to the ectomycorrhizal  
27 forming species (Erland and Taylor, 1999). Several of these mycorrhizal species use dead wood  
28 primarily as support to develop their fruit bodies. Whether they decompose wood in an  
29 ecologically significant way is uncertain (Bruns, pers. comm.; Taylor, pers. comm.). However,  
30 their mycorrhizal activities are broadly recognised and are vital for tree growth and  
31 establishment (Smith and Read, 1997). Particularly in conifer forests, corticioid mycorrhizal  
32 species are widespread and abundant. However, emphasis was only recently placed on these  
33 hitherto often ignored resupinate species (Erland and Taylor, 1999; Kõljalg et al., 2000; Peter et  
34 al., 2001).

1           The ecological requirements of the saprotrophic fungal species on their substrate were  
2 investigated in various studies, especially in Northern Europe (e.g. Renvall, 1995; Høiland and  
3 Bendiksen, 1996; Nordén et al., 2004) and some in Central Europe (Grosse-Brauckmann, 1999;  
4 Dämon, 2001; Küffer and Senn-Irlet, 2005a). Three main characteristics of the dead wood  
5 substrate were shown to be determinant: degree of decomposition of the wood, volume of the  
6 dead wood fraction and host tree species (Heilmann-Clausen and Christensen, 2004; Heilmann-  
7 Clausen et al., 2005; Küffer and Senn-Irlet, 2005b). Furthermore, these studies demonstrated  
8 that the highest number of aphyllorphoroid fungal species is present when a high diversity of  
9 substrate characteristics is provided. Thus, a great variability of dead wood, such as twigs,  
10 branches or logs of different degrees of decomposition, volume and tree species, offers a wide  
11 range of niches for wood-inhabiting fungi. Moreover, wood undergoes several physical and  
12 chemical changes during the decay process (Leibundgut, 1982). Logs especially harbour a high  
13 species richness as they do not decompose equally over the whole length and thus offer niches  
14 for early and late stage species at the same time (Heilmann-Clausen and Christensen, 2003).

15           As representative sampling of dead wood is difficult, because of the extremely  
16 heterogeneous spatial and temporal distribution (Bütler and Schlaepfer, 2004), the problem of  
17 the appropriate size of dead woody debris to be sampled is not solved: for instance, Harmon et  
18 al. (1986) only deal with dead woody debris with a minimum diameter of 10 cm. In the present  
19 study, every debris of dead wood has been collected in the plots, in order to optimise the  
20 delimitation of the diameter classes that influence fungal communities, using statistical  
21 analyses.

22           The same principle has been applied to the degree of decomposition, whereas in  
23 previous ecological studies, the degree of decomposition has only been measured with semi-  
24 quantitative methods (e.g. Renvall, 1995). A determination of decomposition classes will be  
25 attempted by statistical analysis, based on the collected data.

26           Host tree species is widely recognised as an important determinant factor in fungal  
27 ecology, even more pronounced in agaricoid mycorrhizal species. The analyses presented in  
28 this study add a new and more objective way of exploring the ecology of wood-inhabiting fungi  
29 by applying different statistical methods.

30  
31           Our study aims to test the following hypotheses: (1) The three ecological determinants  
32 diameter, degree of decomposition and host species typically characterize species of wood-  
33 inhabiting aphyllorphoroid basidiomycetes, (2) A distinct successional pathway among the  
34 wood-decaying species exists and (3) Multivariate statistical methods, result in a different  
35 substrate classification than proposed in the literature.

36

## 1 **Material and Methods**

2           The fungal samples were collected in a total of 104 rectangular plots of 50 m<sup>2</sup> in  
3 Switzerland and the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains: 93 in Switzerland and 11 in the  
4 Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains. Forests in the five principal biogeographical regions of  
5 Switzerland (Gonseth et al., 2001) were chosen, in order to obtain an overview on the most  
6 frequent forests types in Switzerland and the main silvicultural management practices (Küffer  
7 and Senn-Irlet, 2005a). Within these forests the plots have been selected randomly.

8           The plots in Ukraine have mainly been chosen to include beech forests unaffected by  
9 human interventions (Brändli and Dowhanytsch, 2003). These sites are similar to the beech  
10 forests in Switzerland, with respect to temperature, precipitation, altitude, soil properties and  
11 tree growth capacity (Küffer and Senn-Irlet, 2004, Commarmot et al. 2005).

12           All dead woody debris in which at least one fruit body was observed were  
13 characterised according to the following descriptors: diameter, degree of decomposition and  
14 wood type (host tree species). The degree of decomposition was measured with a penetrometer  
15 PNR10 (Petrotest™) according to Job (2002). To enable statistical analyses with the woody  
16 debris collected, the different types of wood were multiplied with their relative densities. The  
17 values for these calculations were drawn from Kučera and Gfeller (1994) and Sell (1997). A list  
18 of all fertile fungal species observed on every woody debris was used to build the binary  
19 community dataset.

20           In the 104 plots, 3518 woody debris with a total of 261 species of wood-inhabiting  
21 aphylophoroid basidiomycetes were collected. For more detailed information about data  
22 collection, determination and for a comprehensive species list, see Küffer et al. (2004) and  
23 Küffer and Senn-Irlet (2005b).

24           Three Multivariate Regression Trees (MRTs) were computed to determine thresholds  
25 in (1) degree of decomposition, (2) diameter and (3) host tree species, based on the overall  
26 response of the species assemblages (De'ath, 2002, 2006). Woody debris from rare host tree  
27 species (for which less than 10 debris by tree species were collected within the 104 plots) were  
28 not considered. Seven taxa were removed from the species dataset, because they were infertile  
29 and hence undeterminable. Therefore, the multivariate response was a community dataset with  
30 2870 occurrences of 230 fertile fungal species.

31           Species preferences for the different decomposition, diameter classes or host tree  
32 species were calculated using the indicator value of Dufrière and Legendre (1997). The  
33 indicator value IndVal was calculated for every species from its relative abundance and fidelity  
34 to each decomposition or diameter class or each host tree species.

1           General Additive Models (GAMs), constructed using penalised regression splines with  
2 a binomial response (Wood and Augustin, 2002; Wood, 2006), were fitted to the data for the  
3 most faithful species to diameter and decomposition classes.

4           Redundancy Analysis (RDA) was performed to provide an overall view of the  
5 determinism of fungal species assemblages (Legendre and Legendre, 1998; Oksanen et al.,  
6 2007). Only woody debris from the most common host tree species, *Fagus sylvatica*, were  
7 included. Rare fungal species with less than ten occurrences were removed from the community  
8 dataset. Hellinger transformation was applied to the species data prior to the constrained  
9 ordination, in order to avoid considering double absence of a species as a resemblance between  
10 objects (Legendre and Gallagher, 2001).

11           All statistical analyses were computed using R 2.4.1 (R Development Core Team,  
12 2006).

## 14 **Results**

### 15 ***Constrained partitioning with Multivariate Regression Trees***

16           The MRT constrained by the degree of decomposition divided the species dataset into  
17 three classes, according to two thresholds: the first one at 1.65 mm and the second one at 7.83  
18 mm (Fig. 1).

19  
20           For the diameter of woody debris, the MRT showed two main thresholds: a first one at  
21 1.35 cm and a second one at 0.72 cm (Fig. 2). A third split at 2.15 cm was detected but,  
22 contrary to the two previous thresholds, it did not appear when considering either the full  
23 dataset (including missing values and all tree species) or the reduced dataset (without rare  
24 fungal species). Therefore, only the two first thresholds were retained for class delimitation and  
25 further fidelity analysis.

26  
27           The third MRT with host tree species divided primarily the data according to a clear  
28 distinction between broadleaf (to the left) and coniferous (to the right) trees (Fig. 3). Among the  
29 broadleaf species, sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) were grouped  
30 together in a separate branch. The four remaining broadleaf species, beech (*Fagus sylvatica*),  
31 black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), birch (*Betula pendula*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) were located  
32 in the other branch. The further split isolated woody debris from *Fagus*. The coniferous species  
33 were arranged in four branches: in a first split fir (*Abies alba*) was separated from the other host  
34 trees. In a second step, European larch (*Larix decidua*) and stone pine (*Pinus cembra*) were

1 grouped into a single branch, opposed to Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) and Scots pine (*Pinus*  
2 *sylvestris*).

### 3 ***Fidelity analysis***

4 Out of the 59 species with more than ten occurrences taken into account for the  
5 statistical analyses, 22 showed a significant preference for one of the decomposition class  
6 (Table 1). In the first decomposition class, i.e. very low degree of decomposition, seven species  
7 were found, among them the mycorrhizal species *Amphinema byssoides*, but also species  
8 growing in the first stages of the wood decomposition process, e.g. *Exidiopsis calcea*. The  
9 intermediate decomposition class was significantly preferred by four species, all of them  
10 saprophytic ones, such as *Hyphodontia sambuci*. The third class was characterized by a group  
11 of 11 species growing on strongly decayed wood. This group included several poroid species  
12 with more fleshy fruit bodies, such as *Skeletocutis nivea* or *Phellinus ferruginosus*, but also  
13 species adapted to the last stages in the decomposition process, such as *Schizopora paradoxa* or  
14 *Steccherinum fimbriatum* (Niemelä et al. 1995, Küffer & Senn-Irlet 2005b).

15 Only nine common species were significantly faithful to one of the diameter classes (Table 2).  
16 Among the species preferring very small branches and twigs, i.e. diameter class 1, two species  
17 of the genus *Athelia* were found. The species rather growing on coarse woody debris, i.e.  
18 diameter class 3, were *Botryobasidium subcoronatum* and *Scopuloides rimosa*.

19 Calculating fidelity values for host trees revealed that 20 fungal species showed a  
20 significant positive association with a single host tree species (Table 3). However, only nine out  
21 of the eleven host tree species were significantly associated to one or more fungal species.  
22 Beech and Norway spruce, the two most abundant tree species in this study, were not linked in  
23 a positive way to any fungal species. The highest number of significant fungal associations  
24 were with pines, oaks and birch.

25 The preferences of the most faithful species to one class of decomposition or diameter  
26 was verified by predicting the univariate response with a GAM (Fig. 4). For *Amphinema*  
27 *byssoides*, the fitted smooth response decreased linearly with the degree of decomposition. By  
28 contrast, *Hyphoderma praetermissum* showed a unimodal response with an optimum around  
29 10 cm, whereas *Hyphodontia sambuci* showed a weak preference for low and intermediate  
30 degrees of decomposition.

31 Equally GAMs were calculated for the three diameter classes (Fig. 5). *Athelia*  
32 *epiphylla* represents the smallest diameter class up to 0.7162 cm. *Peniophora cinerea* is  
33 common on the intermediate diameter class. *Scopuloides rimosa* represents the thickest  
34 diameter class from 1.353 cm upward. In this GAM the preferences of this species for larger  
35 diameter is clearly emphasised.

## 1 **Redundancy Analysis**

2           Figure 6 shows a biplot of the Redundancy Analysis (RDA) with all the woody debris  
3 of *Fagus sylvatica* and the most common fungal species. The two explanatory quantitative  
4 variables, diameter and decomposition, were placed almost orthogonal, indicating that they  
5 were not strongly correlated (Pearson's linear correlation: 0.139). They explained only 1.35%  
6 of the variance of the Hellinger-transformed species matrix but they were significant  
7 (permutation tests). However, the overall model and the two canonical axes were also  
8 significant. The first axis was equally influenced by both variables.

9           The orthogonal projection of the species position on the decomposition axis allows  
10 reconstructing the hypothetical succession along the decomposition process. On the upper right  
11 of the plot, a series of species suggests the succession on fine branches and twigs, from  
12 *Radulomyces confluens* and *Peniophora cinerea* to *Vuilleminia comedens* and *Trechispora* sp.  
13 For moderate diameter, the succession starts from *Phanerochaete martelliana* and ends up with  
14 *Schizopora paradoxa* or *Phellinus ferruginosus*. On the biggest branches, which are rarer, the  
15 succession is less clear, but should involve *Hyphodontia crustosa* or *Botryobasidium vagum* in  
16 the earliest stages, and *Hyphoderma praetermissum* or *Phlebiella vaga* in the latest stages of  
17 decay. *Botryobasidium subcoronatum* is the most frequent species on big branches at various  
18 degrees of decomposition.

## 21 **Discussion**

### 22 ***Diameter and decomposition classes***

23           The diameter and decomposition classes found by the regression tree analyses are  
24 considerably smaller than indicated in the literature, often arbitrarily set: for the diameter  
25 classes Kruys and Jonsson (1999) or Harmon et al. (1986) only deal with woody debris with a  
26 diameter larger than 5 cm, as they defined the two woody debris categories: coarse woody  
27 debris, CWD ( $\geq 10$  cm diameter) and fine woody debris, FWD (5-9 cm diameter). Many studies  
28 adopted these categories, but discussed the possibility of smaller categories (Nordén et al.,  
29 2004; Eaton and Lawrence, 2006). So, Küffer and Senn-Irlet (2005a) introduced a new category  
30 of woody debris, the very fine woody debris, VFWD ( $< 5$  cm). However, in the present study,  
31 the category limits are found to be even smaller. The importance of these very small branches  
32 and twigs for fungal growth and fruiting were hitherto largely underestimated. They may have  
33 been simply overlooked or not taken into consideration. They have a low potential as a nutrient  
34 source for fungi and in addition an unfavourable surface-volume ratio, i.e. rather large surface,



1 but minor nutrient content. On the other hand, one might argue that these rather large surfaces  
2 are more easily colonised by fungal species avoiding competition with other, more competitive  
3 species, since these small twigs are only colonised by one single species at a time.

4 On the upper end of the scale, the branches, logs and trunks fall all into one single  
5 category ( $> 1.353$  cm diameter). So, the large woody debris categories do not seem  
6 irreplaceable for the fungal community. Nevertheless, the importance of large logs and trunks  
7 for the maintenance of a defined set of specialised species is largely recognised (Renvall, 1995;  
8 Dämon, 2001; Heilmann-Clausen and Christensen, 2004).

9 The classes for the degree of decomposition are also rather low, i.e. skewed towards  
10 the start of the decomposition process. This is also rather unexpected, as especially strongly  
11 decomposed woody debris are assumed to harbour a wide diversity of fungal species (Lange,  
12 1992; Niemelä et al., 1995; Lindblad, 1998; Heilmann-Clausen, 2001). However, our  
13 observations fit into a general model of succession from generalists to specialists with  
14 increasing competition. Quantified data from the literature on low decomposition stages is  
15 scarce, because of the difficulty to measure the degree of decomposition in ecological studies.  
16 Measuring degree of decomposition in the field is often done semi-quantitatively with a knife or  
17 with the help of more or less subjective criteria (Renvall, 1995; Lindblad, 1998; Dämon 2001).  
18 It is generally stated and accepted that a wide range of degrees of decomposition, viz. from  
19 freshly fallen dead branches till completely decomposed wood, is needed, to offer suitable  
20 habitat for many fungal species (Harmon et al., 1986; Küffer and Senn-Irlet, 2005b). This  
21 finding is also underlined by the results of the beech RDA: the fungal species are distributed  
22 over a wide range, when projecting them on the decomposition axis. The decomposition axis  
23 may serve as a substitute for a temporal scale, which is nearly impossible to detect in a short  
24 term study, such as the presented one.

## 25 ***Host tree species***

26 The regression tree analysis for the host tree species shows two main groups of hosts (Fig. 3):  
27 coniferous and deciduous trees. These are the two main systematic groups of tree species. The  
28 similarity within the fungal species inhabiting deciduous tree species is higher than within the  
29 fungal species inhabiting conifer tree species. This pattern is also observed with the agaricoid  
30 fungal species (Bieri et al., 1992), both in the saprophytic and the mycorrhizal species.  
31 Generally, this analysis separates the coniferous trees more distinctively than the deciduous  
32 ones. Fungal species growing on coniferous wood had more time to evolve independently, than  
33 species growing on broadleaf wood, simply due to the older evolutionary age of coniferous  
34 trees (Strasburger et al., 1991). Additionally, with the exception of *Abies alba* the different

1 deciduous trees occupy more often the same habitats than the coniferous species and form more  
2 frequently common vegetation units (Ellenberg and Klötzli, 1972).

3 Within the coniferous host trees, four groups remain in the best regression tree, i.e. *Abies alba*,  
4 *Picea abies*, *Pinus sylvestris* and in one single group: *Larix decidua* and *Pinus cembra*. *Abies*  
5 *alba* is the most dissimilar of these four groups. This may be due to the rather moist habitats  
6 silver firs inhabit in Switzerland. In the Alps, *Abies alba* trees were admixed into broad-leaved  
7 deciduous forests since at latest the early to mid Holocene (i.e. 11500-6000 years ago), also into  
8 thermophilous forests, though human influence has partly shortened this co-habitation (Tinner  
9 et al., 1999; Gobet et al., 2000). The current wide-spread co-occurrence of *Abies alba* and  
10 *Fagus sylvatica* in Central Europe underscores the ecological affinity of silver with broadleaved  
11 deciduous trees (Ellenberg, 1996). In contrast *Picea abies*, *Pinus cembra* and *Larix decidua*  
12 reached higher altitudes, when broadleaf trees appeared (e.g. Tinner et al., 1999; Tinner and  
13 Ammann, 2005; Hofstetter et al., 2006). *Abies alba* is far less tolerant to cold temperatures and  
14 especially late frost events in spring time, than *Picea abies* (Schmidt-Vogt, 1977). However, fir  
15 may easier resist to drought and to windbreak events, due to the well developed root system  
16 (Schütt et al., 1984). The large distance to the *Larix decidua*/*Pinus cembra* group, may be  
17 interpreted ecologically: these two tree species grow in a special environment, the supra-  
18 subalpine zone (Steiger, 1994), where the influence of the climatic factors is very strong, and  
19 only host selective, co-evolved fungal species can succeed. On a first glance, it appears rather  
20 surprising to see *Picea abies* and *Pinus sylvestris* only separating with the last step. Ecological  
21 requirements between these two tree species seem rather different: Norway spruce more in the  
22 moist subalpine forest, *Pinus sylvestris* in the plain, on warm and dry habitats or on wetlands. A  
23 corresponding distance is also visible in evolutionary processes: *Picea abies* and *Pinus*  
24 *sylvestris* evolved rather independently (Price, 1995). However, in some areas of the Central  
25 Alps (e.g. Valais) these two species can form mixed coniferous forests in the upper mountain  
26 and lower subalpine belts, where samples were collected as well.

27 Within the deciduous host trees, three groups remain in the best regression tree, i.e. *Castanea*  
28 *sativa* and *Quercus*; a group with *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Alnus glutinosa* and *Betula pendula*; and  
29 *Fagus sylvatica*. Abandoned *Castanea sativa* plantations predominantly occur in the Southern  
30 part of Switzerland, with an Insubrian climate, i.e. heavy rain falls, high annual precipitation  
31 amounts (reaching 2000 mm in the lowlands), combined with a relatively high temperature  
32 (annual average ca. 12° C) all the year around. *Quercus* rather prefers warmer and dry climate,  
33 nevertheless fungal associations seem to be similar. *Fagus sylvatica*, the most abundant  
34 deciduous tree species, often forming uniform stands, shows a remarkably diverse fungal  
35 community, different from the other deciduous tree species.

1 The other deciduous tree species, which remain together, all have somewhat similar ecological  
2 requirements: *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Betula pendula* and *Alnus glutinosa* prefer rather wet  
3 conditions, often growing in alluvial or riparian forests. These vegetation types are known to be  
4 rather rich and with distinct fungal communities than other forest types (Bujakiewicz, 1989;  
5 Lucchini et al., 1990; Griesser, 1992).

## 6 ***Fidelity analyses and GAMs***

7 The fidelity analyses showed some fungal species to have preferences for very small twigs or  
8 large branches. Only 9 species are found to be significantly bound to one of the three diameter  
9 class found with the regression tree analysis. There are probably still not enough data to detect  
10 preferences of all species.

11 *Athelia epiphylla* is placed with very small twigs and branches (Table 1). This finding  
12 is consistent with previous studies (Nordén and Paltto, 2001; Nordén et al., 2004; Küffer and  
13 Senn-Irlet, 2005a). This preference is even found in forests where larger wood is present as  
14 substrate, such as forests reserves or near-natural forests (Küffer and Senn-Irlet 2005b). Other  
15 species prefer rather large woody debris such as logs and trunks. *Scopuloides rimosa* may serve  
16 as an example for these species preferring coarse woody debris.

17 The degree of decomposition indicates where to place the species during the decomposition  
18 process. It is assumed that by analysing spatially different stages of decay at a single moment,  
19 certain conclusions on the succession in time can be drawn (e.g. Renvall, 1995). The early  
20 decayers prefer dead wood freshly fallen from the trees, an example may be *Amphinema*  
21 *byssoides*, a frequent and abundant species in conifer forests (Fig. 4). As the decomposition  
22 process advances, the physical and chemical composition of the wood changes (Leibundgut,  
23 1982; Boddy and Rayner, 1988) and with it also the fungal species composition (Renvall, 1995;  
24 Niemelä et al., 1995). *Hyphodontia sambuci* may serve as an example for a fungal species  
25 specialised to intermediate stages of decomposition while *Hyphoderma praetermissum* is  
26 mostly found on later stages of the decomposition process.

27 Only few fungal species showed any significant host tree preferences (Table 3).  
28 Among them we found associations already known, such as *Peniophora limitata* on *Fraxinus*  
29 *excelsior* (Eriksson et al., 1978; Boidin, 1994) or *Coniophora arida* on *Pinus sylvestris*  
30 (Hallenberg, 1985). On the other hand some species preferences could not be explained as  
31 easily: *Stereum hirsutum* on *Castanea sativa* or *Vuilleminia comedens* on *Quercus*. Both  
32 species have a broader host range according to the literature (Eriksson et al., 1978; Boidin et al.,  
33 1994). However, the indicator value method assesses especially the relative abundance of a  
34 fungal species within a host tree species, i.e. it takes into account how many woody debris of  
35 each tree species has been found.

1           This fact may also in part explain why no fungal species was found to be associated  
2 with *Fagus sylvatica* or *Picea abies*, the two most abundant tree species.

### 3 ***Redundancy Analysis***

4           A similar picture is visible in the RDA: the first axis represents the decomposition, the  
5 second axis the diameter. This order means also that the factor decomposition is stronger than  
6 the diameter for the characterisation of fungal substrate preferences. However, the presence of  
7 the small fraction of woody debris remains important for many fungal species (Heilmann-  
8 Clausen and Christensen, 2004; Nordén et al., 2004; Küffer and Senn-Irlet 2005b)

9           The same fungal species are highlighted in this analysis, as in the fidelity analyses.  
10 Especially for the decomposition process a succession path among the fungal species could be  
11 detected: from the pioneer species till late stage species.  
12

### 13 **Acknowledgements**

14           We wish to thank Wolfgang Dämon (Salzburg) for kindly checking some critical  
15 specimens. We acknowledge Brigitte Commarmot (Birmensdorf), Vasył Chumak (Uzhhorod),  
16 Pavlo Lovas (Uzhhorod) and Mychailo Mat'kovskiy (Uzhhorod) for help with organisation and  
17 field work. Willy Tinner (Zürich) is gratefully acknowledged for valuable comments on the  
18 manuscript and for help in collecting literature. We are grateful to the Swiss Federal  
19 Environmental Agency, Berne, and the Swiss National Science Foundation (programme  
20 SCOPES, Scientific co-operation with Eastern Europe) for funding.  
21

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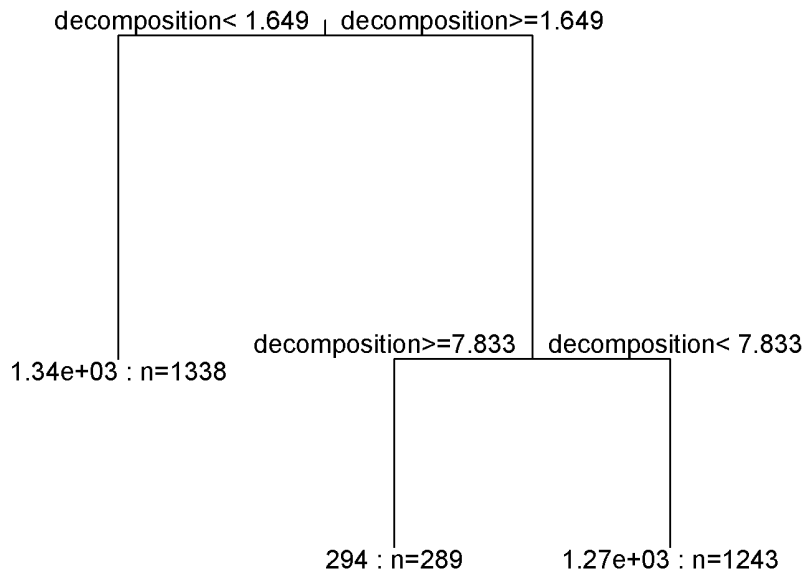
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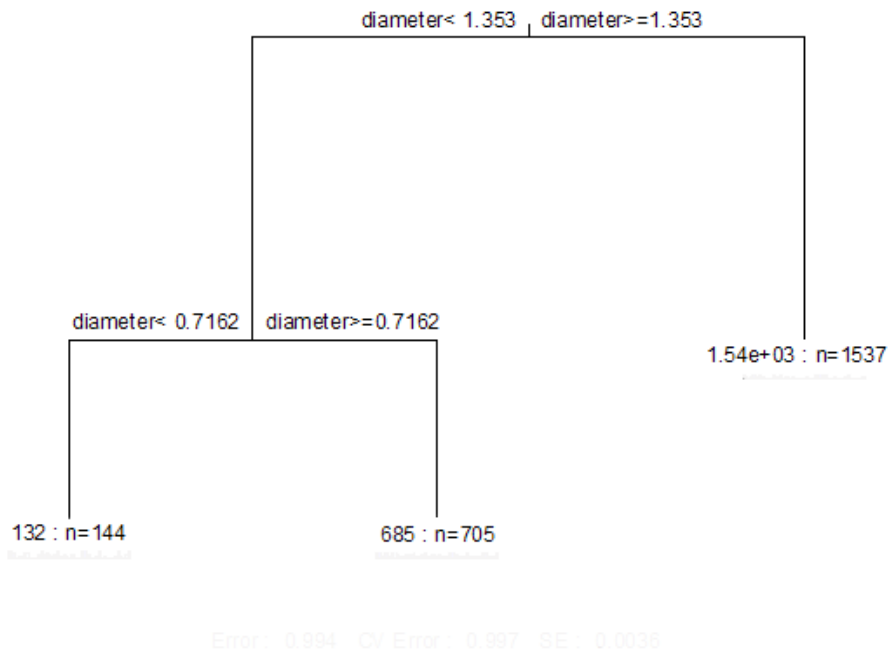


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3 **Fig. 1.** Multivariate Regression Tree of the fungal community matrix constrained by the degree  
4 of decomposition. Numbers in the branching indicate the thresholds between the degree of  
5 decomposition and are labelled in mm (see text for explanations). Terminal leaves show  
6 variance and number of objects.

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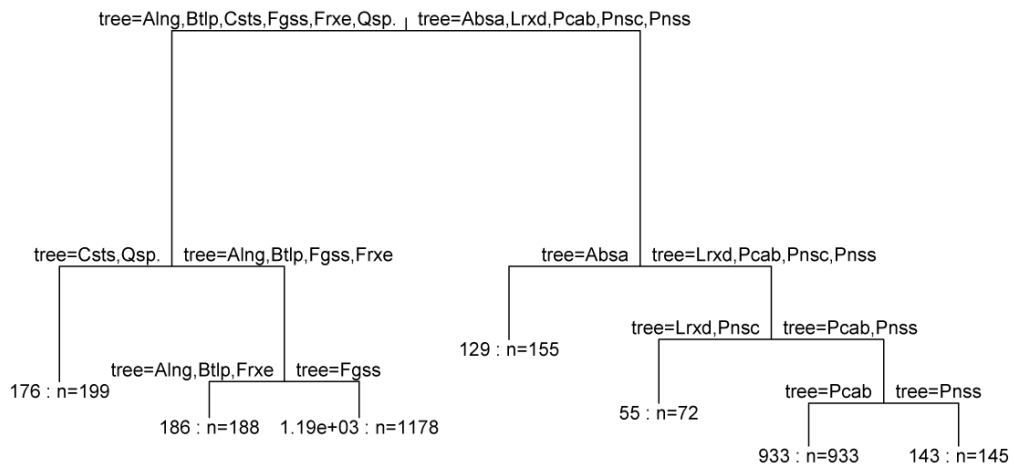
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**Fig. 2.** Multivariate Regression Tree of the fungal community matrix constrained by the diameter. Numbers in the branching indicate the thresholds between the diameter classes and are labelled in cm (see text for explanations). Terminal leaves show variance and number of objects.

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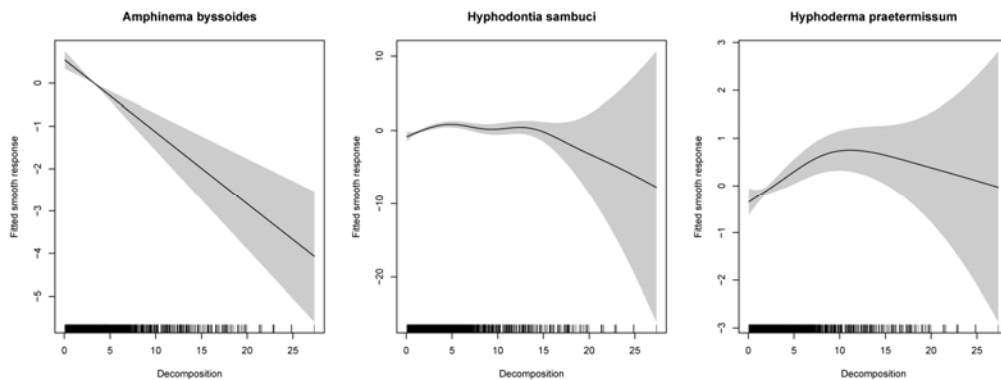
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4 **Fig. 3.** Multiple Regression Tree of the fungal community matrix constrained by the host tree  
5 species. Only tree species with more than ten occurrences were taken into the analysis. Species  
6 abbreviations: Absa=*Abies alba*, Alng=*Alnus glutinosa*, Btlp=*Betula pendula*, Csts=*Castanea*  
7 *sativa*, Fgss=*Fagus sylvatica*, Frxe=*Fraxinus excelsior*, Lrxd=*Larix decidua*, Pcab=*Picea*  
8 *abies*, Pnsc=*Pinus cembra*, Pnss=*Pinus sylvestris*, Qsp=*Quercus* sp. Terminal leaves show  
9 variance and number of objects.

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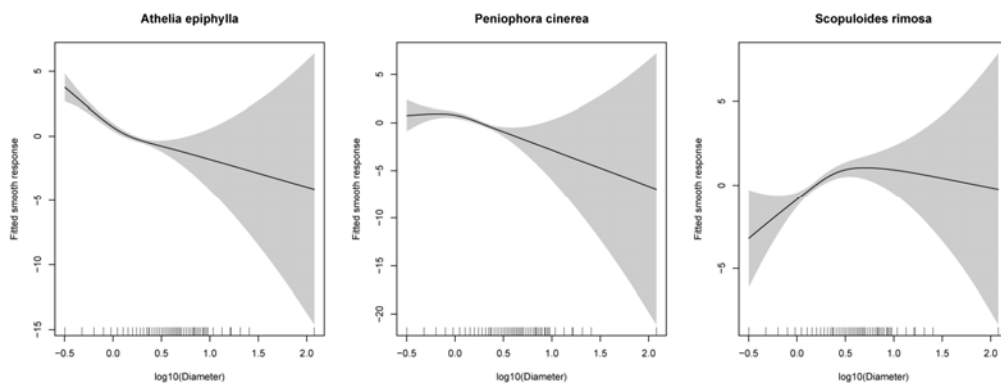
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4 **Fig. 4.** Estimated terms describing the dependence of occurrence of three fungal species on the  
5 degree of decomposition in mm. Estimates (solid line) and 95% Bayesian confidence intervals  
6 (greyed area), with covariate values as a rug plot along the bottom of the plot are shown.  
7 *Amphinema byssoides* for weakly decomposed woody debris, *Hyphodontia sambuci* for  
8 intermediate stages of decay and *Hyphoderma praetermissum* for advanced stages of  
9 decomposition.

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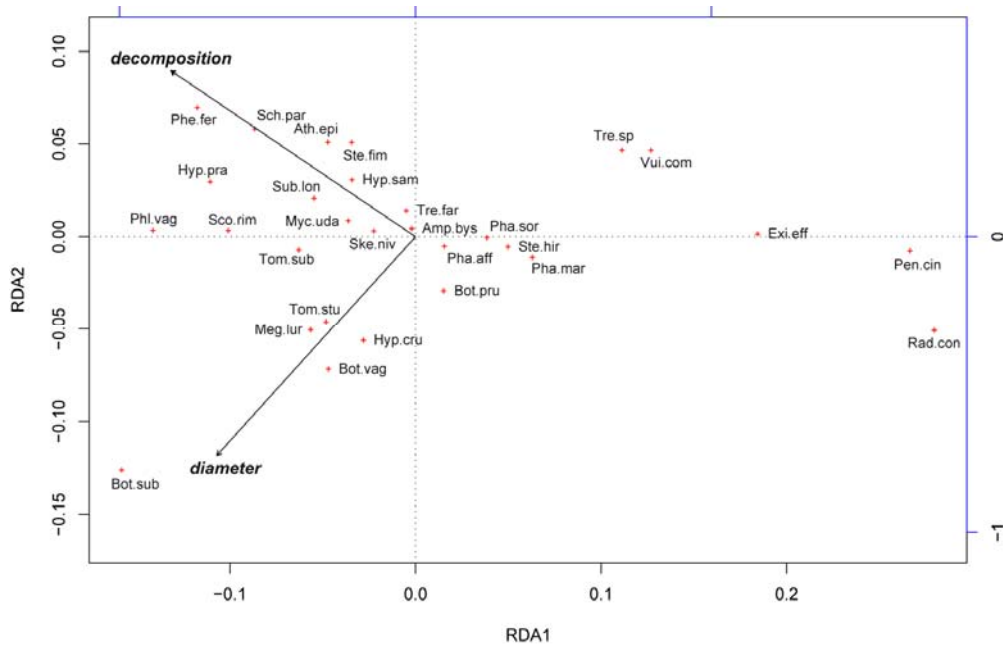
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14 **Fig. 5.** Estimated terms describing the dependence of occurrence of three fungal species on the  
15 log-transformed diameter. Estimates (solid line) and 95% Bayesian confidence intervals (greyed  
16 area), with covariate values as a rug plot along the bottom of the plot are shown. *Athelia*  
17 *epiphylla* for the finest twigs, *Peniophora cinerea* for fine branches and *Scopuloides rimosa* for  
18 the thicker branches.

19

1



2

3

4 **Fig. 6.** Redundancy Analysis biplot of axes 1 and 2 with fungal species constrained by two  
 5 explanatory variables. Only fungal species with more than 10 occurrences were taken into  
 6 consideration. Species abbreviations: Amp.bys=*Amphinema byssoides*, Ath.epi=*Athelia*  
 7 *epiphylla*, Bot.pru=*Botryobasidium pruinaum*, Bot.sub=*Botryobasidium subcoronatum*,  
 8 Bot.vag=*Botryobasidium vagum*, Exi.eff=*Exidiopsis effusa*, Hyp.cru=*Hyphodontia crustosa*,  
 9 Hyp.pra=*Hyphoderma praetermissum*, Hyp.sam=*Hyphodontia sambuci*,  
 10 Meg.lur=*Megalocystidium luridum*, Myc.uda=*Mycoacia uda*, Pen.cin=*Peniophora cinerea*,  
 11 Pha.aff=*Phanerochaete affinis*, Pha.mar=*Phanerochaete martelliana*, Pha.sor=*Phanerochaete*  
 12 *sordida*, Phe.fer=*Phellinus ferruginosus*, Phl.vag=*Phlebiella vaga*, Rad.con=*Radulomyces*  
 13 *confluens*, Sch.par=*Schizopora paradoxa*, Sco.rim=*Scopuloides rimosa*, Ske.niv=*Skeletocutis*  
 14 *nivea*, Ste.fim=*Steccherinum fimbriatum*, Ste.hir=*Stereum hirsutum*, Sub.lon=*Subulicystidium*  
 15 *longisporum*, Tom.sub=*Tomentella sublilacina*, Tom.stu=*Tomentella stuposa*,  
 16 Tre.far=*Trechispora farinacea*, Tre.sp=*Trechispora* sp., Vui.com=*Vuilleminia comedens*.  
 17

1 **Table 1.** Fungal species showing a high fidelity to the three decomposition classes. 1: low (<  
2 1.65 mm, n = 1338); 2: intermediate (n = 1243); 3: high (> 7.83 mm, n = 289). IndVal is the  
3 fidelity index of Dufrière and Legendre, associated to a permutation test: \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ , \*\*  $P <$   
4  $0.01$ , \*  $P < 0.05$ . The two last columns give the total number of occurrences of the fungal  
5 species and the percentage of woody debris of the given class on which the species was  
6 observed, respectively. Species with less than 10 occurrences are ignored.  
7

Species	Decomposition class	IndVal	Occ.	Freq. (%)
<i>Amphinema byssoides</i> (Pers. ex Fr.) J.Erikss.	1	7.01 ***	255	11.96
<i>Exidiopsis calcea</i> (Pers. ex St.Adams) Wells		4.02 **	92	5.31
<i>Athelia epiphylla</i> s.l. Pers.		2.66 *	95	4.86
<i>Radulomyces confluens</i> (Fr.) M.P. Christ.		2.64 *	116	5.01
<i>Peniophora pithya</i> (Pers.) J.Erikss.		1.27 *	28	1.64
<i>Merismodes fasciculatus</i> (Schwein.) Earle		0.91 *	16	1.05
<i>Phanerochaete martelliana</i> (Bres.) J.Erikss. & Ryvardeen		0.80 *	18	1.05
<i>Hyphodontia sambuci</i> (Pers.) J.Erikss.	2	3.13 **	109	5.79
<i>Vuilleminia comedens</i> (Nees ex Fr.) Maire		2.23 *	86	4.02
<i>Trechispora</i> sp.		1.22 *	39	2.01
<i>Tubulicrinis subulatus</i> (Bourd. & Galz.) Donk		0.92 *	20	1.21
<i>Hyphoderma praetermissum</i> (Karst.) J.Erikss. & Strid	3	3.85 **	104	7.27
<i>Schizopora paradoxa</i> (Schrاد. ex Fr.) Donk		3.37 ***	51	5.19
<i>Phellinus ferruginosus</i> (Schrاد. ex Fr.) Pat.		3.15 ***	21	3.81
<i>Scopuloides rimosa</i> (Cooke) Jülich		2.48 **	60	4.50
<i>Steccherinum fimbriatum</i> (Pers. ex Fr.) J.Erikss.		1.67 ***	21	2.42
<i>Botryobasidium subcoronatum</i> (Höhn. & Litsch.) Donk		1.59 **	23	2.42
<i>Subulicystidium longisporum</i> (Pat.)		1.46 **	17	2.08

Parmasto			
<i>Phanerochaete sordida</i> (P. Karst.) J.Erikss. & Ryvarde	1.43 *	42	2.77
<i>Skeletocutis nivea</i> (Jungh.) Keller	1.15 *	16	1.73
<i>Phanerochaete velutina</i> (DC. ex Fr.) P. Karst.	0.92 *	13	1.38
<i>Mycoacia uda</i> (Fr.) Donk	0.85 *	15	1.38

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1

2



1 **Table 2.** Fungal species showing a high fidelity to the three diameter classes. 1: low (< 7.16  
 2 mm, n = 161); 2: intermediate (n = 799); 3: high (> 13.53 mm, n = 1910). IndVal is the fidelity  
 3 index of Dufrière and Legendre, associated to a permutation test: \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*  
 4  $P < 0.05$ . The two last columns give the total number of occurrences of the fungal species and  
 5 the percentage of woody debris of the given class on which the species was observed,  
 6 respectively. Species with less than 10 occurrences are ignored.

7

Species	Diameter class	IndVal	Occ.	Freq. (%)
<i>Athelia epiphylla</i> s.l. Pers.	1	16.07 ***	95	20.50
<i>Radulomyces confluens</i> (Fr.) M.P. Christ.		3.63 *	116	7.45
<i>Stereum hirsutum</i> (Willd. ex Fr.) S.F. Gray		3.06 *	79	6.21
<i>Trechispora</i> sp.		2.50 **	39	4.35
<i>Plicatura crispa</i> (Pers. ex Fr.) Rea		2.15 **	10	2.48
<i>Athelia neuhoffii</i> (Bres.) Donk		1.74 *	16	2.48
<i>Peniophora cinerea</i> (Pers. ex Fr.) Cooke	2	2.99 *	86	5.63
<i>Scopuloides rimosa</i> (Cooke) Jülich	3	2.37 *	60	2.88
<i>Botryobasidium subcoronatum</i> (Höhn. & Litsch.) Donk		1.20 *	23	1.20

8

9

1 **Table 3.** Fungal species showing a high fidelity to the host tree species: *Abies alba* (n = 155),  
 2 *Larix decidua* (n = 54), *Pinus cembra* (n = 18), *Pinus sylvestris* (n = 145), *Alnus glutinosa* (n =  
 3 104), *Betula pendula* (n = 38), *Castanea sativa* (n = 179), *Fraxinus excelsior* (n = 46) and  
 4 *Quercus* sp. (n = 20). IndVal is the fidelity index of Dufrière and Legendre, associated to a  
 5 permutation test: \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*  $P < 0.05$ . The two last columns give the total  
 6 number of occurrences of the fungal species and the percentage of woody debris of the given  
 7 host tree on which the species was observed, respectively. Fungal species with less than 10  
 8 occurrences are ignored, except for *Quercus*.  
 9

Species	Host tree species	IndVal	Occ.	Freq. (%)
<i>Amphinema byssoides</i> (Pers. Ex Fr.) J.Erikss.	<i>Abies alba</i>	17.74 ***	255	43.23
<i>Exidiopsis calcea</i> (Pers. ex St.Adams) Wells		4.49 *	92	9.68
<i>Phlebiella vaga</i> (Fr.) P.Karst.	<i>Larix decidua</i>	5.97 *	161	14.81
<i>Athelia epiphylla</i> s.l. Pers.	<i>Pinus cembra</i>	24.21 ***	95	50.00
<i>Piloderma byssinum</i> (P.Karst.) Jülich		7.56 *	15	11.11
<i>Coniophora arida</i> (Fr.) P.Karst.	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	15.48 ***	27	17.24
<i>Hyphodontia alutacea</i> (Fr.) J.Erikss.		7.28 **	14	7.59
<i>Tubulicrinis accedens</i> (Bourd. & Galz.) Donk		5.90 **	12	6.21
<i>Hypochnicium punctulatum</i> (Cooke) J.Erikss.		3.87 *	19	4.83
<i>Tubulicrinis subulatus</i>		3.12 *	20	6.21
<i>Gloeocystidiellum porosum</i> (Berk. & Curt.) Donk	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	5.51 **	14	7.69
<i>Merismodes fasciculatus</i> (Schwein.) Earle	<i>Betula pendula</i>	15.90 ***	16	21.05
<i>Peniophora cinerea</i> (Fr.) Cooke		6.71 **	86	15.79
<i>Cylindrobasidium laeve</i> (Pers. ex Fr.) Chamuris		3.89 *	13	5.26
<i>Stereum hirsutum</i> (Willd. ex Fr.) S.F. Gray	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	24.37 ***	79	30.73
<i>Peniophora limitata</i> (Chaill. ex Fr.) Cooke	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	23.91 ***	11	23.91
<i>Vuilleminia comedens</i> (Nees ex Fr.) Maire	<i>Quercus</i> sp.	19.67 ***	86	35.00
<i>Peniophora quercina</i>		18.72 ***	9	20.00
<i>Datronia mollis</i>		8.72 **	9	10.00
<i>Phanerochaete tuberculata</i> (P.Karst.) Parmasto		3.69 *	19	5.00

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