

# Lichenicolous fungi of southern Scandinavia with particular reference to those associated with *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat.

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**Abstract:** Lichenicolous fungi associated with *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. are studied in southernmost Scandinavia, i.e., Skåne, the southernmost province in Sweden and southern Denmark. Two species, *Didymocyrtis slaptoensis* and *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae*, are reported as new for the Nordic countries, whereas three species, *Didymocyrtis* cf. *consimilis*, *Erythricium aurantiacum*, and *Illosporopsis christiansenii* are recorded for the first time from Skåne. New localities for rare lichenicolous fungi from southern Scandinavia and southernmost Denmark are also listed. Notes on the taxonomy and ecology of *Teloggalla olivieri* and *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* are provided.

**Keywords:** *Didymocyrtis*, lichenicolous fungi, new species, *Pyrenochaeta*, *Teloggalla*, *Xanthoria*, Sweden, Denmark

## INTRODUCTION

*Xanthoria* (Teloschistaceae) is a genus of lichenized fungi with a worldwide distribution. Before the molecular era, this genus included c. 50 species (Kärnefelt, 1989), but today only 13 species remain in *Xanthoria* in the strict sense (Kondratyuk et al., 2022a). In the recent years knowledge of lichenicolous fungi associated with *Xanthoria* has increased considerably, and currently there are more than 40 lichenicolous species associated with *Xanthoria* s. lat. (Diederich et al., 2018; Tsurukau & Etayo, 2017; Suija et al., 2021).

When new material of the genus *Xanthoria* was collected in southernmost Scandinavia for a taxonomic revision, focus was shifted to the large number of different lichenicolous fungi inhabiting many of the thalli identified as *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat., presently including three taxa, i.e., *X. calcicola* Oxner, *X. ectaneooides* (Nyl.) Zahlbr. and *X. aureola* (Ach.) Erichsen, which are nested in the *Xanthoria* s. str. clade (Kondratyuk et al., 2022a). Herewith, the first observations of the lichenicolous fungi associated with saxicolous specimens of *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. in southernmost Scandinavia, and during the field studies, several rare species and species with a poorly known distribution were identified.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

All lichenicolous fungi associated with *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. were listed and studied at 37 localities in southernmost Scandinavia (Fig. 1, Table 1). All localities are open habitats (cemeteries, churchyards, etc.) potentially suitable for epilithic *X. calcicola* s. lat. A frequency study of the commonest species, *Teloggalla olivieri*, was performed (Tables 1–2). The specimens were studied and determined microscopically at the unit of Molecular Cell Biology, Department of Biology, Lund University. A key to lichenicolous fungi growing on *Xanthoria* s. str. has earlier been presented by Tsurukau & Etayo (2017), but also keys of lichenicolous fungi growing on other genera were used (Hafellner et al., 2008; Etayo & Berger, 2009; Halici et al., 2009; Etayo et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2015; Khodosovtsev & Darmostuk, 2016). Local checklists of lichenicolous fungi were also consulted (Hafellner et al., 2008; Sparrius et al., 2016; Darmostuk & Khodosovtsev, 2017; Varga et al. 2021).



**Fig. 1.** Investigated sites with *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat., most of them with lichenicolous fungi (filled circles) in southern Scandinavia.

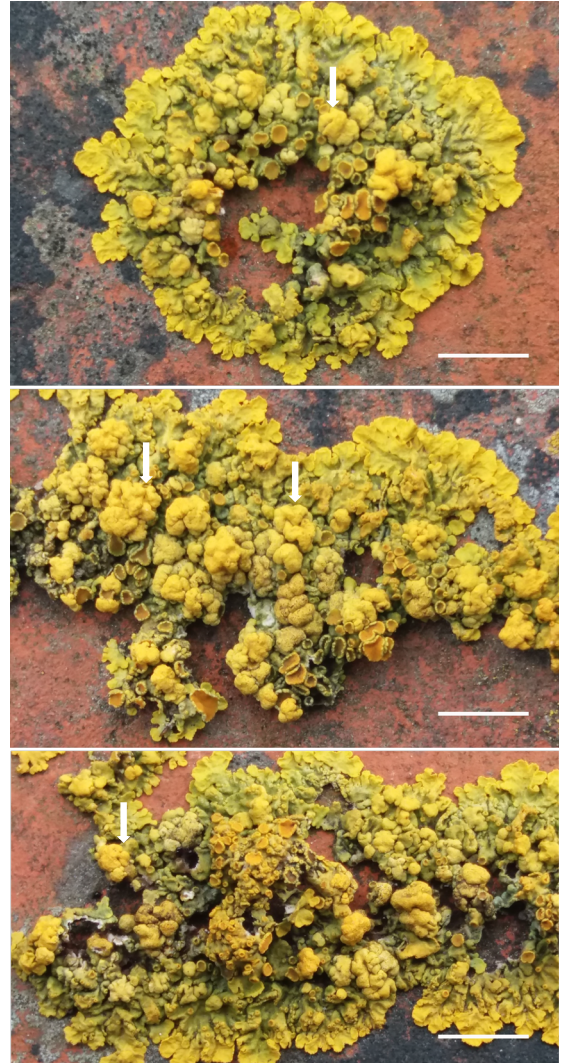
## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The largest number of lichen specimens were collected at seven plots in Denmark (numbers 2, 12, 15, 19, 20, 21, 23), and four in Sweden (numbers 24, 27, 34, 37) (Table 1). No lichenicolous fungi were found at seven of the 37 investigated sites. Among the records, *Teloggalla olivieri* was the commonest lichenicolous fungus found at 28 sites, and at 13 sites, it was the single lichenicolous fungus recorded. The number of species of lichenicolous fungi found per site varied between one and nine (Table 1).

Within this study, eleven species of lichenicolous fungi were found associated with epilithic *Xanthoria* in southern Scandinavia (Table 2). Two species, *Didymocyrtis slaptoensis* and *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* were recorded for the first time in the Nordic countries, and three species, *Didymocyrtis* cf. *consimilis*, *Erythrimum aurantiacum* and *Illosporopsis christiansenii* were reported for the first time from the province Skåne, southernmost Sweden.

Three species, i.e., *Athelia arachnoidea*, *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* and *Teloggalla olivieri* were the most abundant, often killing the host thalli (Table 2). However, *Athelia arachnoidea* and *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* were registered at four and three sites respectively. *Didymocyrtis* cf. *consimilis*, *Phoma* sp. and *Tremella caloplacae* were registered at a single locality each (Table 2). *Teloggalla olivieri* is the commonest species

in southern Scandinavia; found on 301 of 1185 studied specimens of epilithic lichens of the genus *Xanthoria*, although it was not the target of the collection (Table 1).



**Fig. 2.** *Teloggalla olivieri* on *Xanthoria* aff. *ectaneoides*, Søborg church, 16.04.2023, lichenicolous fungus infecting especially central portion of host thallus (field photos). Scale 1 cm.

*Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* and *Teloggalla olivieri* cause a similar destroying effect on the host lichen *Xanthoria* aff. *ectaneoides*. When the parasite is abundant in central parts, most of the lichen may be destroyed (Figs. 2–4). Lichen thalli may appear as incomplete circles

**Table 1.** List of localities of investigated epilithic communities of *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. The number of specimens collected and infected by lichenicolous fungi are indicated.

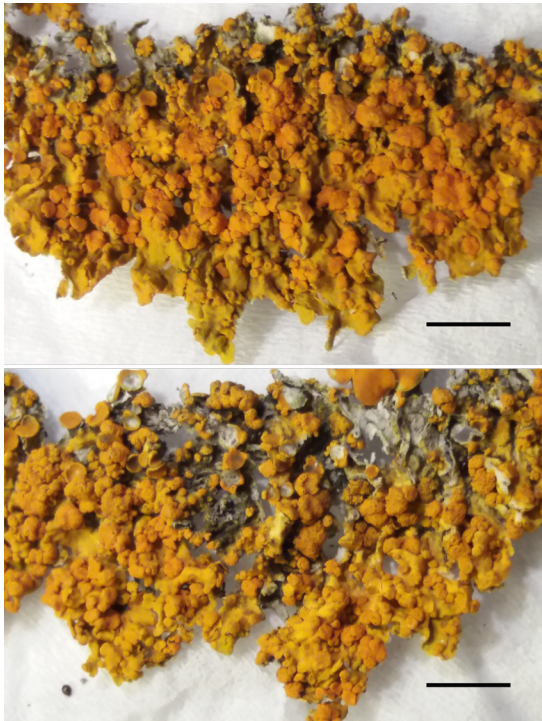
No	Locality	Date	Position	Number of specimens collected	Number of specimens with <i>Telogalla olivieri</i> (Table 2)	Other lichenicolous fungi (Table 2)
1	DENMARK. Amager. Tårnby par., the church, on tiles of cemetery wall.	13.08.2023	55.6280°N 12.6028°E	35	1	8, 11
2	Bornholm. Nexø par. On stone fence in the town.	28.10.2022	55.0629°N 15.1250°E	56	13	2, 5
3	Nylars par., the church. On stone fence.	28.10.2022	55.0724°N 14.8100°E	11	-	-
4	Østerlars par., the church. On stone fence.	29.10.2022	55.1648°N 14.9656°E	2	-	-
5	Nyker par., the church. On stone fence.	29.10.2022	55.1396°N 14.7595°E	11	-	-
6	Fyn: Svendborg Landevej, on concrete.	28.05.2023	55.1860°N 10.7330°E	44	11	-
7	Jutland: Haderslev, the old church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	1.07.2023	55.2501°N 9.4891°E	33	5	4, 10
8	Lolland. Børsø par., Naturskolen. On granitic rocks.	11.10.2022	54.7567°N 11.4893°E	5	-	-
9	Møn. Borre par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	22.09.2022	54.9959°N 12.4432°E	6	2	-
10	Faneford par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	11.10.2022	54.9013°N 12.1511°E	23	4	-
11	Zealand. Bjernede par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.05.2023	55.462°N 11.625°E	22	3	-
12	Farum par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	4.02.2023	55.8070°N 12.3573°E	54	12	1, 6, 11
13	Fjenneslev par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.05.2023	55.4336°N 11.6875°E	22	8	-
14	Gørløse par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	3.12.2022	55.8853°N 12.1991°E	22	-	3
15	Helsingør par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.03.2023	56.0208°N 12.1969°E	170	15	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11
16	Højby par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	25.06.2023	55.9128°N 11.5996°E	15	4	-
17	Slangstrup par. SE edge of Lysstrup forest. On tile roof.	3.12.2022	55.8536°N 12.1968°E	4	-	4
18	Søborg par., castle ruins, on modern brick inclusions.	16.04.2023	56.0906°N 12.3097°E	45	31	8
19	Søborg par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	16.04.2023	56.0861°N 12.5120°E	70	37	8
20	Ærø. Søby par. church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.05.2023	54.9386°N 10.2568°E	55	38	-
21	Marsdal par., the church in town. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.05.2023	54.8550°N 10.5170°E	59	22	8
22	Marsdal par., Ommel church, on tile roof.	27.05.2023	54.8646°N 10.4891°E	17	3	2, 8
23	Ærøskøbing par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	26.05.2023	54.8879°N 10.4122°E	71	43	8
24	SWEDEN. Skåne. Bromma par., the church. On stone fence.	28.09.2022	55.4707°N 13.8001°E	34	6	-
25	Brönnestad par., Hovdala castle. On granitic rocks.	26.08.2022	56.1040°N 13.7138°E	10	2	-
26	Bunkeflo par., Lernacken, on granitic rocks.	12.07.2022	55.5541°N 12.9191°E	13	-	-
27	Everöd par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	4.03.2023	55.9018°N 14.0730°E	64	3	1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11,
28	Gislöv par., Gislövsläge, on coastal granitic wall.	6.09.2022	55.3567°N 13.2369°E	20	3	10
29	Husie par., the former LV4 military area. On cement.	27.08.2022	55.5773°N 13.0840°E	6	5	7

No	Locality	Date	Position	Number of specimens collected	Number of specimens with <i>Teloggalla olivieri</i> (Table 2)	Other lichenicolous fungi (Table 2)
30	Igelösa par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	11.05.2023	55.7631°N 13.2744°E	16	1	-
31	Kvistofra par., Rydebäck, on granitic rocks.	12.08.2022	55.9655°N 12.7722°E	6	1	-
32	Malmö, Västra Hamnen, on granitic rocks.	16.08.2022	55.6133°N 12.9813°E	14	-	-
33	Mölleberga par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	11.05.2023	55.6085°N 13.1770°E	14	1	-
34	Norra Vram par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	12.11.2022	56.0870°N 12.9734°E	15	5	2
35	Stehag par., Stehag, Rapsvägen 3, on tile roof.	30.06.2022– 25.07.2023	55.9009°N 13.3948°E	45	5	2, 5, 11
36	Tofta par., the church. On tiles of cemetery wall.	2.04.2023	56.8669°N 12.9262°E	75	18	1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11
37	Vitiskövle par., the castle, on stone bridge.	26.07.2022	55.8549°N 14.1336°E	2	-	-

**Table 2.** Lichenicolous fungi associated with epilithic *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. species in southern Scandinavia, their distribution and frequency. Frequency: 1 – presence only as single ascoma or conidioma, 2 – rather common, 3 – abundant.

Species	Localities (Table 1)	Frequency
1 <i>Athelia arachnoides</i> (Berk.) Jülich	12, 15, 27, 37	3
2 <i>Bryostigma parietinarium</i> (Hafellner & A.Fleischhacker) S.Y.Kondr. & Hur	2, 15, 22, 27, 34, 37	2
3 <i>Didymocyrtis cf. consimilis</i> Vain.	14	1
4 <i>Didymocyrtis slaptoensis</i> (D.Hawksw.) Hafellner & Ertz	7, 15, 17	1
5 <i>Erythricium aurantiacum</i> (Lasch) D.Hawksw. & A.Henrici	2, 15, 27, 34, 37	2
6 <i>Illosporopsis christiansenii</i> (B.L.Brady & D.Hawksw.) D.Hawksw.	12, 27, 37	1
7 <i>Phoma</i> sp.	15, 29	1
8 <i>Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae</i> Diederich	1, 15, 18, 19, 21–23, 27, 37	3
9 <i>Teloggalla olivieri</i> (Vouaux) Nik. Hoffm. & Hafellner	1–2, 6–7, 9–13, 15–16, 18–25, 27–31, 33–34, 36–37	3
10 <i>Tremella caloplacae</i> (Zahlbr.) Diederich	7, 15, 28	1
11 <i>Xanthoriicola physciae</i> (Kalchbr.) D.Hawksw.	1, 12, 15, 27, 34, 37	2



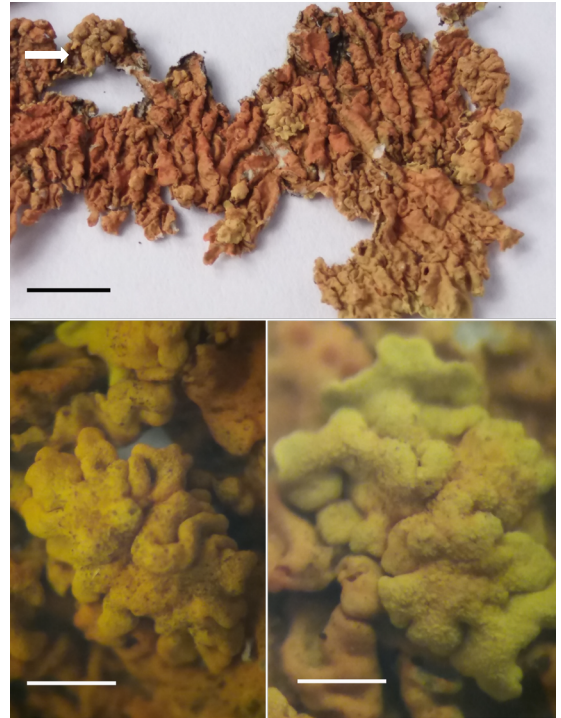


**Fig. 3.** *Telogalla olivieri* on *Xanthoria* aff. *ectaneoides*, Nexø, 28.10.2022, lichenicolous fungus infecting the whole host thallus. Scale 1 cm.

with healthy peripheral zones but destroyed centres. Such thalli remind of the Euroasian species *Kudratoviella anularis* (Clauzade & Poelt) S.Y.Kondr., L.Lökös, I.Kärnefelt & A.Thell (Kondratyuk et al., 2022b). In addition, moss mites were frequently found in lichens damaged or killed by *Telogalla olivieri*. Gall formations of the host probably offer additional protection for moss mites. In the autumn and winter of 2022 most lichen thalli of *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. were almost completely eaten by moss mites at several localities.

#### **Notes on the lichenicolous fungi found on *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. in southern Scandinavia**

ATHELIA ARACHNOIDEA (Berk.) Jülich  
New localities within Skåne and Denmark are found for this rather common, occasionally lichenicolous fungus known for its broad spectrum of lichen hosts. The species was particularly abundant at four localities (2, 15,



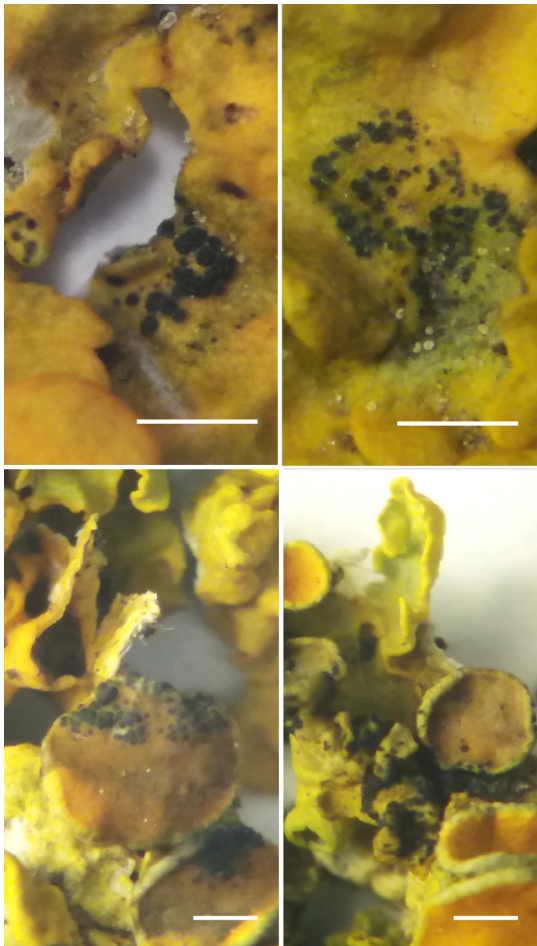
**Fig. 4.** *Telogalla olivieri* on *Xanthoria* aff. *ectaneoides*, Fanefjord, 11.10.2022, general view of host thallus fragment (upper, scale 1 cm) and enlarged galls (lower, scale 1 mm).

27 and 37, Table 1) where most of the hosts were killed.

BRYOSTIGMA PARIETINARIUM (Hafellner & A. Fleischhacker) S.Y. Kondr. & Hur  
New localities in Skåne and Denmark are reported for this rather common lichenicolous fungus. It was earlier known from Denmark (Alstrup, 1993; Fleischhacker et al., 2016), and from a single locality in Skåne (Westberg et al., 2023). It is found not only on saxicolous hosts but is also common on epiphytic *Xanthoria* specimens. *Bryostigma parietinarium* was very frequent at four localities (1, 15, 27 and 37, Table 1) where the hosts were killed.

There are four species of Arthoniaceae inhabiting the genus *Xanthoria*, of which *Bryostigma parietinarium* growing on *Xanthoria parietina* and *B. molendoi* growing on the *Rusavskia elegans* and *Calogaya saxicola* groups are the commonest (Fleischhacker et al. 2016). The main differences between these two species are

the colour of ascomata, pigmentation of the ascomatal section and the number of ascomata per infection spot (Fig. 5). The characters of our investigated specimens fit the description of *B. parietinarium* compared to *B. molendoi* even if the former is commoner on epiphytic species.



**Fig. 5.** *Bryostigma parietinarum* on *Xanthoria* aff. *ectaneoides*, Ommel, 27.05.2023 (the upper row), Tofta, 2.04.2023 (the lower row). Scale 2 mm.

*DIDYMOCYRTIS SLAPTONENSIS* (D. Hawksw.) Hafellner & Ertz

New to the Nordic countries. The specimen has *Phoma*-like conidiomata with rather long ellipsoid conidia measuring 5–7 x 2–3  $\mu\text{m}$ .

*DIDYMOCYRTIS* CF. *CONSIMILIS*

This taxon is reported as new to Skåne. It was earlier known only from the northernmost province of Sweden, Torne Lappmark (Westberg

et al., 2021). *Didymocyrtis* cf. *consimilis* is usually collected along with the *Caloplaca cerina* group, however, specimens with almost identical ITS sequences and similar spore size are growing on rather distantly related hosts (Ertz et al., 2015), explaining the use of the name cf. *consimilis* for this *Phoma*-like fungus which is characterized by almost spherical conidia, 3–5  $\mu\text{m}$  diam.

*ERYTHRICIUM AURANTIACUM* (Lasch) D. Hawksw. & A. Henrici

This species is here reported as new to Skåne, earlier known from the Swedish provinces Östergötland, Södermanland, and Uppland (Westberg et al., 2021) and from Denmark (Motiejūnaitė & Grochowski, 2014).

*ILLOSPORIOPSIS CHRISTIANSENI* (B.L. Brady & D. Hawksw.) D. Hawksw.

This species is here reported as new to Skåne, earlier known from the Swedish provinces Småland, Öland, Östergötland, Södermanland, Uppland, Jämtland and Norrbotten (Kärnefelt et al. 2014; Westberg et al., 2021), and from Bornholm, Denmark (Wieczorek et al., 2017).

*PYRENOCHAETA XANTHORIAE* Diederich

The species is new to Nordic countries. This parasitic fungus proved to be very common in Helsingør (Zealand) and Marstal (Ærø) in Denmark. At the latter locality, *P. xanthoriae* was even more frequent than *Telogalla olivieri*. In general, *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* is rather rare on epilithic thalli of *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. compared with epiphytic specimens of *X. parietina* s. lat. in southernmost Scandinavia. *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae* is rather rare on the thalli investigated within this study, usually present as a single ascoma or conidioma among other lichenicolous fungi, e.g., *Xanthoriicola physciae*, *Telogalla olivieri* and *Bryostigma parietinarium*.

*TELOGALLA OLIVIERI* (Vouaux) Nik. Hoffm. & Hafellner

The lichenicolous genus *Telogalla*, characterized by inducing irregular galls with immersed perithecia and conidiomata, includes two species; *Telogalla olivieri* and *T. cajasensis* Etayo, inhabiting *Xanthoria parietina* s. lat. and the genus *Leptogium* respectively (Hoffman & Hafellner, 2000; Etayo, 2017). No molecular data are hitherto available for these two lichenicolous fungi in public DNA databases.

XANTHORIICOLA PHYSCIAE (Kalchbr.) D. Hawksw. New localities within Skåne and Denmark are reported for this rather common hyphomycetous lichenicolous fungus that inhabits fruiting bodies of *Xanthoria* (Motiejūnaitė & Grochowski, 2014). *Xanthoriicola physciae* was particularly abundant, killing the hosts at six localities, i.e., 3, 12, 15, 27, 31 and 37 (Table 1).

## CONCLUSIONS

Eleven species of lichenicolous fungi were found on thalli of *Xanthoria calcicola* s. lat. in southern Scandinavia. Two of them, *Didymocyrtis slaptoensis* and *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae*, are new for the Nordic region, while three are new for the province of Skåne. This study is a first contribution to a better knowledge of diversity and distribution for this still overlooked group of organisms.

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