Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

(www.pembsfungi.org.uk)

Newsletter (6/2008)

News

This edition includes some variety - with a rust fungus and mention of a strange bacterium affecting thistles. By the time this newsletter is circulated, our autumn programme of forays should be well under way, as well as a visit to the County by Dr. Eef Arnolds.

Records

Grassland fungus records continue to arrive - though fruiting at some locations seems fairly subdued - perhaps influenced by the very wet summer? Grassland recording has certainly not been helped by the rather long grass at many sites.


C. amoenoides

One interesting new record for the County was a pale yellow spindle, *Clavaria amoenoides*, which turned up in a semi-improved hayfield at Somerton Farm in September. With only three recent records from Wales, and one historic Scottish record, this appears to be quite a scarce species. It fruits as a dense clump of spindles (not unlike the related species: smoky spindles and white spindles).

Several members have been actively looking for non-grassland species - Jill Wiseman recently sent in a photograph of the Common Earthball (*Scleroderma citrinum*) after it had split open to release its spores. This woodland species - with a characteristic dirty-yellow scaly covering - was found in Little Milford woods. It usually favours acid soils and, like other earthballs, may be poisonous.

Earlier in the year, Arthur Rivett spotted and photographed a Burnet Rose at Stackpole which was covered in a rather attractive rust fungus. Details were sent to Nigel Stringer who advises that the species is one of the Rose Rusts: *Phragmidium rosae-pimpinellifoliae.*


S. citrinum


P. Rosae-pimpinellifoliae

White thistle disease

Nigel Stringer recently threw out an interesting challenge to the network: he asked us to look out for specimens of creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) that had turned white.

The condition is the result of attack by a bacterium - a species of *Pseudomonas syringae* - curiously named CT99B016C. The action of this bacterium has been studied in Camada where it has been isolated (and patented!) as a potential biological control agent for thistles.

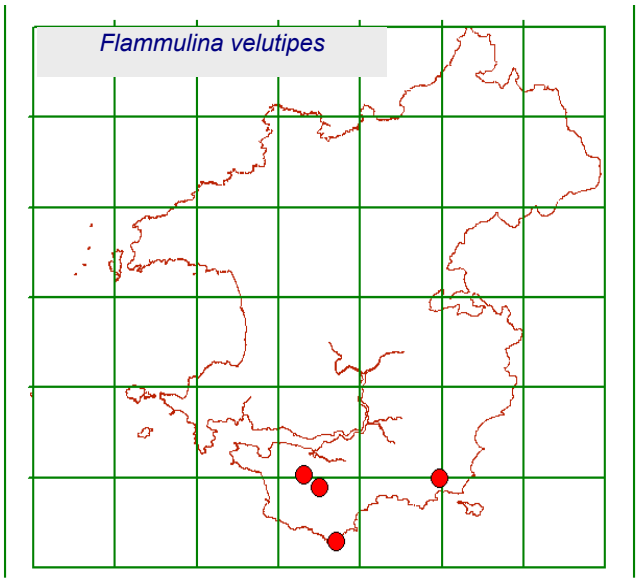
Shortly after we posted the request, Mike Karpaty found the first Pembrokeshire record at East Williamston.

Local species distribution

With winter approaching, we've selected *Flammulina velutipes* (Velvet Shank) as a common and readlily identifiable species to look out for.

Velvet Shank appears in clusters on dead wood, especially elm and willow, during the winter. The fruiting bodies have a moist orange-brown cap, and dark, velvety stipe which is paler near the top. Most field guides contain a good description of this fungus.

This species should be widely distributed across the County - so is well worth looking for during the winter - particularly on dead or standing elm which has been affected by Dutch Elm disease.



Acknowledgements: Distribution maps generated using the DIVA-GIS program. Records provided by the Fungus Records Database, Britain and Ireland. Digitised Watsonian Vice-County boundary data © All rights reserved. National Biodiversity Network Trust and Crown copyright 2003.

David Harries (October 2008)