

A new host and distribution record of a larch needle blight, *Meria laricis* Vuill., in Alberta

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Meria laricis Vuill. was identified in four specimens deposited at the Northern Forest Research Centre, Canadian Forestry Service, Edmonton, Alberta. This is the first record of *M. laricis* in Alberta and the first time it has ever been found on alpine larch (*Larix lyallii* Parl.).

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On a identifié *Meria laricis* Vuill. sur quatre spécimens déposés au Centre de recherches forestières du nord, Service canadien des forêts, Edmonton, Alberta. Ceci constitue le premier cas de *M. laricis* rapporté en Alberta, et aussi la première fois que *M. laricis* est trouvé sur le mélèze alpin (*Larix lyallii* Parl.).

Meria laricis Vuill., a needle blight of larch (*Larix* spp.), was first described in France in 1895 (5). This unique fungus is generally classified under Fungi Imperfecti, but some consider it to be a basidiomycete (5). After examining a culture, R.J. Bandoni suggested that this fungus is probably a basidiomycete closely related to Ustilaginales (per. comm. *).

The disease has been reported in Asia, Europe, New Zealand, and North America (1). In North America, Ehrlich (2) reported the disease on western larch (*L. occidentalis* Nutt.) in Idaho and Washington, concluding that it was probably firmly established in the Pacific Northwest. Leaphart (4) lists the disease as also occurring in Canada, and a distribution map prepared by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute (1), which referred to Leaphart's report, recorded the disease in British Columbia. This report of the fungus in British Columbia was not well documented, however, until the disease was positively identified in 1981 from collections on western larch (DAVFP 22583, 22621). The 1981 survey found the disease to be generally present in western larch stands in southeastern British Columbia. The survey suggested that the disease had been present for many years prior to 1981 (3). The disease was also found on several western larch trees planted as ornamentals in Victoria and Duncan on Vancouver Island, and near Harrison Lake, B.C.

Following the confirmation of the fungus in British Columbia, specimens of larch deposited in the Disease Reference

Collection of the Northern Forest Research Centre were examined. Four were found to contain *Meria laricis*. One specimen was on western larch collected from Kootenay National Park, B.C. (CFB 1933, 1954), and three specimens were on alpine larch (*L. lyallii* Parl.) collected from Highwood Pass, Alberta (CFB 5481, 1962; CFB 21074, 1981), and Yoho National Park, B.C. (CFB 21395, 1982).

This is the first time *Meria laricis* has been found on alpine larch, and the first record of it in Alberta.

Literature cited

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* Information contained in a letter from R.J. Bandoni, Department of Botany, University of British Columbia, to Y. Hiratsuka, Northern Forest Research Centre. 1983.

