
Nomenclature of *Podaxis pistillaris*

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There is much confusion regarding nomenclature and author citation of *Podaxis pistillaris*. The nomenclature and author citation of this species has been made in different ways by different scientists :

Podaxon carcinomale (L.) Fr. (Clements and Shear, 1973)

Podaxix pistillaris (L. ex Pers.) Fr. (Bessey, 1950; Morse, 1933)

Podaxis pistillaris (Pers.) Morse (Smith and Smith, 1973)

It may be mentioned here that Linnaeus (1771) described *Lycoperdon pistillare* L. in 1771 and *Lycoperdon carcinomale* L. ten years later in 1781 (Linnaeus, 1781). Morse (1933) established these two fungi to be synonymous. As the name *L. pistillare* was introduced earlier, so the specific epithet '*pistillare*' got priority and was therefore accepted. But Fries (1829) made orthographic correction of the word '*pistillare*' and '*pistillaris*' meaning 'club shaped' (basidiocarp). Fries' orthographic correction is allowed [Rule 24, last clause, Art. 57 (Regles Internationales de la nomenclature redigees par John Briquet, Jena : Gustav Fischer, 1912)]. Thus, the correct specific epithet of this fungus is '*pistillaris*' and not '*carcinomale*'.

As this species was originally described by Linnaeus (1771), therefore, in author citation use of 'L' is justified. Persoon (1801) transferred this species to the genus *Scleroderma* Pers. but this species differs from *Scleroderma* in many important features (Bessey, 1950; Clements and Shear, 1973; Smith and Smith, 1973). Yet Persoon's name is mentioned in author citation of this species as 'L. ex Pers.' because his Synopsis, 1801, is the starting point of nomenclature. But in the 1990 revision of the Botanical Code the use of 'ex' has been redefined. Thus the correct author citation for this species is 'L. : Pers.'. 'L. ex Pers.' is no longer used.

Of the two generic names - *Podaxis* Desv. (1809) and *Podaxon* Fr. (1829) under which this fungus has been described, *Podaxis* has priority, Desvaux (1809) erected the genus *Podaxis* to accommodate *Podaxis senegalensis* Desv. Fries (1829) transferred *Lycoperdon pistillare* L. of Linnaeus (1771) to the genus *Podaxon* and described it as *Podaxon pistillaris* Fr. Later Morse (1933) established that *L. pistillare* of Linnaeus (1771), *P. senegalensis* of Desvaux (1809) and *P. pistillaris* of Fries (1829) to be the same species. But this species does not possess many important characters of the genus *Lycoperdon* Pers. (Bessey, 1950; Smith and Smith, 1973). Therefore, inclusion of this species in a separate genus - either in *Podaxis* of Desvaux or in *Podaxon* of Fries, became inevitable. But the name *Podaxon* was not introduced by Fries as a new generic name. He introduced

it merely as an orthographic variant of *Podaxis* Desv. But this was introduced incorrectly by Fries (Morse, 1933). Thus *Podaxis* and *Podaxon* are nomenclaturally one and the same thing and the valid generic name is *Podaxis* Desv.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident, therefore, that the first person to combine the specific epithet *pistillaris* with the generic epithet *Podaxis* was Fries in 1829. The fact that Fries used an orthographic variant does not invalidate this combination. Therefore, the correct nomenclature of this fungus is *Podaxis pistillaris* (L. : Pers.) Fr.

In no way the name of 'Morse' can come into account in author citation of this species as has been cited by Smith and Smith (1973) because Morse did not make generic transfer of this species to the genus *Podaxis* Desv.

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