European surveys for fungal pathogens of *Myriophyllum spicatum*

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*Myriophyllum spicatum* (Haloragidaceae), a submerged aquatic plant, is a serious ecological and economic weed of water systems of North America. It is native to Europe and Asia, occurring from the west coast of Ireland to the east coast of China. Surveys for fungal pathogens of *M. spicatum* have been undertaken in Europe over a period of two years, with the aim of finding a classical biocontrol agent. In the first year, surveys were conducted in southern England, Ireland, and northern mainland Europe. In the second year, sites were selected in northern England, Scotland, Scandinavia and southern Europe. Survey sites were selected to reflect the diverse environmental conditions in which *M. spicatum* occurs. Fungal strains from a variety of genera (*Alternaria, Coniothyrium, Cylindrocladium, Embellisia, Fusarium, Glomerella, Mycocentrospora, Nectria, Phoma, Pythium, Stagonospora, Verticillium*) have been isolated and are being screened for their potential as biocontrol agents.

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*Puccinia evadens, a biological control agent for Baccharis halimifolia*

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*Puccinia evadens*, a macrocyclic, autecious rust fungus is being considered for use as a classical biocontrol agent against *Baccharis halimifolia* (Asteraceae), a North American plant that has become a troublesome invasive weed in the coastal rangelands of mid-eastern Australia. To determine the host specificity and safety of this pathogen, a host-range study was conducted in Florida where the fungus is native. Ninety-six plants within the Asteraceae (representing 12 tribes, 49 genera, and 71 species) were screened by using urediospore inoculum. The test plants were selected primarily on the basis of their importance to Australia, such as those occurring in the same habitats as *B. halimifolia* and ecologically important native species. Also, plants phylogenetically related to *B. halimifolia* and representatives of economic crops were screened. A rating scale of infection type was developed based on microscopic and macroscopic observations of the reactions of host- and non-host-plants to the rust. The results confirmed that *P. evadens* is pathogenic only to *Baccharis* spp., and within this genus, only to four of the six species screened. Three accessions of *B. halimifolia* tested, including one from Australia, were highly susceptible. All other hosts were immune to highly resistant to the rust. Therefore, *Puccinia evadens* is a highly host-specific and safe biological control agent. A proposal has been made to the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service to import this fungus into quarantine for further evaluations in Australia.