

***Laimaphelenchus australis* sp. nov. (Nematoda: Aphelenchina) from exotic pines, *Pinus radiata* and *P. pinaster*, in Australia**

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Abstract

Laimaphelenchus australis **sp. nov.** is described from bark of the exotic pines, *Pinus pinaster* from Kuitpo, South Australia, and *Pinus radiata* from Dartmoor, Victoria. This is the second record of *Laimaphelenchus* from Australia, and the first from exotic *Pinus* spp. The new species is characterised by having a tail with a single offset terminus, bearing 3–4 pedunculate tubercles, ending with 4–6 finger-like protrusions. In addition, the anterior region of the new species, as seen with SEM, lacks a distinct labial disc.

Key words: Aphelenchina, Australia, *Laimaphelenchus australis* **sp. nov.**, Nematoda, *Pinus pinaster*, *Pinus radiata*

Introduction

The genus *Laimaphelenchus* Fuchs 1937 currently consists of eleven species described from all continents (Hunt 1993, Swart 1997, Peneva & Chipev 1999, Zhao *et al.* 2006). Since they are mostly found associated with moss, algae and lichen on trees, particularly conifers, and also in tunnels of wood boring insects (Hunt 1993), it is important to be able to recognise and distinguish them from the commercially important nematode *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (Steiner & Buhner 1934) Nickle 1970.

In February 2000, symptoms similar to that of pinewood disease, caused by pine wilt nematode *B. xylophilus*, were seen on pine trees in Williamstown, near the Melbourne docklands. An exotic nematode was detected from wood samples taken from a dying *Pinus halepensis*. The nematode isolated from the tree was tentatively identified as *Bursaphelenchus hunanensis* Yin, Fang & Tarjan (David Smith, pers. com.). In 2002,