

## THE CONIFER BLUE-STAIN FUNGAL COMPLEX IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

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The Ophiostomatoid fungi represent an artificial grouping of morphologically similar genera, including *Ophiostoma*, *Grossmannia*, *Ceratocystis*, *Sphaeronaemella*, *Ceratocystiopsis*, *Gondwanamyces*, and *Cornuvesica*. Adaptation to insect dispersal has arisen frequently in the evolution of *Ascomycetes*, and convergence on similar morphologies and the frequent synanamorphy has greatly confused taxonomic delimitations. Knowledge of Ophiostomatoid fungi systematics in Spain is very limited. For this reason, surveys have recently been undertaken in Spain, particularly to characterise the fungi associated with bark beetles that infest *Pinus radiata* in the country. These surveys have revealed many species not previously known from Spain and a number of new taxa appear to be present. In addition to characterising species present, research concerning the frequency of occurrence of these fungi has also been undertaken. An area of particular interest is in the importance of these fungi in terms of trade in lumber and quarantine. Thus, pathogenicity tests with some of the fungi have been undertaken and biological control options are being investigated. Ultimately, it is also hoped that some of these fungi might be useful in industrial applications, particularly in the production of novel products.