Short Paper

First record of *Botryosphaeria dothidea* associated with pistachio (*Pistacia vera L.*) panicle blight in Iran

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**Abstract:** During spring and summer of 2012, a disease characterized by panicle blight was observed on some pistachio (*Pistacia vera L.*) trees grown in Kerman province. Eighteen isolates of a *Botryosphaeriaceae* sp. were obtained from affected panicles. Based on morphological and molecular characteristics, isolates were identified as *Botryosphaeria dothidea*. To our knowledge, this is the first report of *B. dothidea* associated with pistachio panicles in Iran.

**Keywords:** Botryosphaeriaceae, internal transcribed spacer, Kerman province, *Pistacia vera*

**Introduction**

Panicle and shoot blight of pistachio caused by *Botryosphaeria dothidea* (Moug.: Fr.) Ces. & De Not. is regarded as one of the most important threats to commercial production of pistachio. The disease was first reported in commercial California pistachio orchards in 1984 (Rice et al., 1985). Panicle and shoot blight of pistachio is characterized by infections of fruit clusters, buds, and twigs, and can result in significant yield reduction (Michailides et al., 1999). During a field survey similar symptoms to panicle blight were observed in some pistachio orchards in Kerman province. The present study was therefore undertaken to isolate and identify fungal isolates associated with symptomatic pistachio panicles in some orchards of this province.

**Materials and Methods**

During spring and summer of 2012, blighted pistachio clusters and fruits with epicarp lesions were collected from Khabootarkhan, Rafsanjan and Zarand orchards in Kerman province (south-eastern Iran). Fungal isolations were made from symptomatic tissues on potato dextrose agar (PDA, Merck, Germany) plates. All isolates showing typical morphology of the *Botryosphaeriaceae* (fast growing, dark, greenish brown or grayish cultures) were selected and stimulated to produce pycnidia and conidia, by growing them on PDA with sterilized pine needles (Fig. 1) placed onto the medium surface (Slippers et al., 2004). Morphological identifications of *Botryosphaeriaceae* isolates were confirmed by sequence analysis of the internal transcribed spacer (ITS) nrDNA region using the primers ITS1 and ITS4 (Fig. 2) (White et al., 1990) as described by Úrbez-Torres et al. (2008).

**Results**

In the current study, 32 pistachio cluster samples showing blight symptoms and red to black lesions on the fruits were collected from 11 pistachio orchards in Khabootarkhan (4 orchards), Zarand (3 orchards) and Rafsanjan (4 orchards). Eighteen fungal
isolates resembling Botryosphaeriaceae (13.33% of total isolates) were obtained only from 14 clusters (43.8% of total samples) as the positive samples. These isolates were obtained from nuts (6 isolates) and rachises (12 isolates) showing lesion symptoms. A total of 135 fungal isolates were obtained from samples collected. All isolates resembling Botryosphaeriaceae produced aerial and highly dense mycelium on PDA. Cultures were initially white but becoming grey to olivaceous-grey darkening to black with age. These isolates had a regular colony shape and colour (whitish-cream in 48 h), abundant aerial mycelium and a fast growth rate [mean radial growth of 12.4 mm (SD = 0.13, SE = 0.23) at 30 °C as optimum temperature in 48 h] that turned dark-green in 7-10 days (Fig. 1). All isolates sporulated within 25-30 days of incubation on pine needles on PDA agar. Based on cultural and morphological characters (Fig. 1) the isolates well fitted with the description of its anamorph by Slippers et al. (2004). The other fungal isolates including of Cladosporium sp., Pestalotiopsis sp., Penicillium spp., Aspergillus niger, A. flavus, Alternaria spp. and Paecilomyces sp. were isolated from symptomatic tissues which were not considered further in this study. The ITS sequences of the Botryosphaeriaceae isolates from this study had 100% identity with isolates previously identified as Botryosphaeria dothidea in GenBank (GenBank Accession no. AY786322.1, Phillips et al., 2005).

*Figure 1* Botrysopaheria dothidea. A- 3-days-old colony on PDA (at 30 °C). B: 18-days-old colony on PDA. C: Conidiomata on PDA culture showing oozing of conidia. D: Pycnidia formed on a sterile pine needle (a) and on PDA culture (b). E: Mature, aseptate and hyaline conidia. F: Conidia developing on conidiogenous cells (Bars = 10 μm).
Figure 2 A 600 bp amplified fragment from ITS (ITS1-5.8S-ITS2) region of 5 representative isolates of *Botryosphaeria dothidea* using ITS1 and ITS4 primers on 1% agarose gel: M: DNA marker, 100 bp, lanes 1 to 5: *B. dothidea* isolates, lane 6: negative control.

References


اولین گزارش از همراه با بلوط خوشه پسته (Pistacia vera L.) در ایران

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چکیده: در طول بیل و ناتوانی سال 1391 غلظتی مشابه با بیماری بلوط خوشه در بعضی از باغ‌های بلوط در استان کرمان مشاهده گردید. در طول این مطالعه 18 جدابه از یک فراخ‌گرفته Botryosphaeriaceae مربوط به گل‌شوی و ریخت شناسایی شد. براساس اطلاعات موجود این اولین گزارش از B. dothidea همراه با خوش‌های پسته در ایران است. براساس این شناسایی باید اقدامات پیشگیری‌گردد. برای شناسایی باید از B. dothidea پسته‌های پسته در ایران است.

واژگان کلیدی: Pistacia vera, استان کرمان, internal transcribed spacer, Botryosphaeriaceae