



Banksiamyces toomansis

Richard Robinson, Science Division, Manjimup, richard.robinson@dec.wa.gov.au



Species of *Banksiamyces* are small, stalked, disc-shaped fungi that grow specifically on cones of species of *Banksia*. *Banksiamyces toomansis* appears to be the most common species; here it is growing on *Banksia quercifolia* cones. Despite the large number of *Banksias* in Western Australia, *Banksiamyces* do not appear to be common, or perhaps it is because they are easily overlooked. Fruit bodies persist for some time and have the capacity to dry out in unfavourable conditions (*inset above: Banksiamyces* sp. on *Banksia sphaerocarpa*) to resurrect during periods of suitable moisture (*main photo*). In the southwest, the best time to find them in the fully expanded state is late winter to early spring.

Banksia toomansis discs range from 2–5mm in diameter and are generally dark charcoal-grey to light grey in colour. Stems are about 5mm long, and generally lighter in colour. The fruit bodies are difficult to see in the dried state. A number of other species have been described, but all look very similar and are difficult to distinguish. Some species are specific to the *Banksia* host, but *Banksiamyces toomansis* appears to grow on a number of different banksias.

The scientific name refers to its host and locality where it was first collected in the early 1880s: *Banksia*-: refers to the host plant species, *myc*-: fungus or mushroom, i.e. 'banksia fungus', *toomansis*: after the Tooma River in southern NSW.