

POLYBLASTIA

P.M.McCarthy

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Polyblastia A.Massal., *Ric. Auton. Lich. Crost.* 147 (1852), *nom. cons.*; from the Greek *polys* (many) and *blastos* (a bud, sprout or germ), in reference to the richly fertile thalli of the type species.

Type: *P. cupularis* A.Massal.

Thallus crustose, immersed in the substratum or superficial, continuous to areolate, or minutely granular or squamulose, ecorticate. Perithecia immersed to superficial, with or without a dark brown to black involucrellum. Asci 1–8-spored, clavate to cylindroclavate, thin-walled; apex not or only slightly thickened. Ascospores submuriform to muriform, ellipsoidal, cylindrical or clavate, colourless to dark brown, in some species with a gelatinous perispore. Conidiomata not seen.

A genus of c. 120 species, mainly known from temperate to boreal regions of Eurasia; very rare in the tropics. Four species occur in south-eastern Australia.

Closely related to *Staurothele*, from which it differs in the absence of hymenial algae. It is also similar to and doubtfully distinct from *Thelidium*, but most species of that genus have colourless ascospores with transverse septa only. *Agonimia*, formerly included in *Polyblastia*, has a 3-layered exciple.

T.D.V.Swincow, Pyrenocarpous lichens: 15. Key to *Polyblastia* in the British Isles, *Lichenologist* 5: 92–113 (1971); O.W.Purvis & P.W.James, *Lich. Fl. Great Britain & Ireland* 481–486 (1992); P.M.McCarthy, Notes on Australian Verrucariaceae (lichenised Ascomycotina): 4. *Polyblastia*, *Muelleria* 8: 269–273 (1995).