

***Russula recondita* Melera & Ostellari, 2016**

Diagnosis: Compared to other fetid Russulas, *R. recondita* is distinguished by its completely mild flavour, without any bitterness, and its smell composed of fruity (pelargonium-like) and rubbery (*R. foetens*-like) notes. The spores of *R. recondita* have variable ornamentation, normally with warts from isolated to briefly connected, more rarely with obvious connections. In contrast, *R. praetervisa* has warts with numerous connections, forming an incomplete mesh. As the intercarpic variation for spore ornamentation ranges overlap for these two species (3–5 vs. 1–4, according to the category of Table 3), as well as intercarpic range of absolute values for spore size ($6\text{--}10 \times 5\text{--}7\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ vs. $7\text{--}9 \times 5.5\text{--}7.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$), the distinction of the two species based on these characters could be problematic.

Description

Pileus: Quite fleshy, 35–70 mm in diameter, first convex then flattened to deeply depressed. Margin thin, first slightly involuted then straight, at maturity striated-sulcate up to half of the radius or over. Cuticle easily removable towards the centre of the cap, relatively dry but viscid, especially in the centre, when wet. Colour ochraceous, fawn, ochre honey, ochre-grey-bistre, almost always darker in the centre, often rusty spotted; spots usually limited, seldom extensive.

Lamellae: Quite regular, brittle, rarely with lamellulae, adnate or slightly subdecurrent, in some cases slightly anastomosing, cream-coloured, sometimes rust touched.

Stipe: Cylindrical or slightly tapered downwards, $30\text{--}55 \times 8\text{--}16\text{ mm}$, sometimes slightly flared at the top, first firm but soon spongy and then lacunose. Whitish, sometimes with bistre nuances, often purple red touched at the base, or in the absence of this pigment, often rust or rusty-brown touched.

Flesh: Not very firm, soggy and soon saggy, whitish but often rusty touched. Smell fruity-acid, overall unpleasant. Taste mild everywhere, initially little perceptible but soon decidedly nauseating and disgusting, reminiscent of rubber and caoutchouc.

Chemical reaction: Guaiac: quickly blue-green; FeSO₄: weak pink-grey.

Spore print: Dark cream, Code Romagnesi IIc–IIId.

Spore: Ovoid, elongated, $7\text{--}8.5 \times 5.5\text{--}7\ \mu\text{m}$ (Q: $1.14\text{--}1.46\ \mu\text{m}$), clearly amyloid, echinulate, with obtuse conical warts, some of them sometimes pronounced and up to $1\ \mu\text{m}$ high, completely isolated or more or less connected by short ridges or fine connections, in some cases partially cross-linked (reticulate). Hilar plage evident by SEM observation (Fig. 5a–c).

Cuticle: Cuticle hairs cylindrical and septate, branched, up to $4\text{--}5\ \mu\text{m}$ in width, with end obtuse or attenuated. Dermotocystidia few in number and with poorly reflective content, measuring $4\text{--}6\ \mu\text{m}$, usually conical-elongated but sometimes with end attenuated or capitate (Fig. 5d).

Habitat: Common from summer to late autumn, growth in groups of many specimens at the edge of deciduous or coniferous forests, preferably on not heavy or clay soils. This species seems to prefer open grassy areas on sandy and airy soils, but it is particularly reported from parks and highly frequented places. Not observed under evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex* and *Quercus suber*), Mediterranean pines (*Pinus pinaster* and *Pinus pinea*) and *Cistus* spp.

Distribution: Europe. Haplotypes of sister clades found in North America and Asia, provisionally described as a species complex, need to be better described to establish whether they represent distinct taxa or geographic variants of *R. recondita*.

Additional material examined: See Table 2 (samples nos. 3, 4, 45, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 66 and 92).