

ON A WHITISH FORM OF *HYGROCYPHE MINIATA*

RUBEN WALLEYN¹ & WIM VERAGHTERT²

¹Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek, Gaverstraat 4, 8500 Geraardsbergen

²Dennenlaan 13, 2500, Lier

Samenvatting

Een vorm van het Vuurzwammetje *Hygrocybe miniata* zonder gele, oranje of rode kleuren wordt beschreven, waarbij de taxonomische waarde van de kleur van de schubben in *Hygrocybe* subsectie *Squamulosae* wordt in vraag gesteld.

Last year, one of us (WV) found some whitish agarics, quite scattered between mosses and grasses in a poor grasland with some orange *Hygrocybe miniata*, along with *Entoloma conferendum*, *Rickenella swartzii* and *Clavulinopsis helvola*. The cap colour varied from white to yellowish cream (as in *H. russocoriacea*), often with a pale to moderately dark greyish or brownish grey centre, sometimes almost entirely dark greyish; these colours stayed also visible on the dried material. The cap surface appeared slightly squamulose under a hand lens.

It did not remind of a species known to us until microscopical examination revealed that it seemed nothing more than a colour variant of *Hygrocybe miniata*, only differing by the lack of the pigment(s?) that are responsible for the typical yellow, orange and reddish tinges of this common species (plate 2, fig. 1, page 24). Such a variant of *Hygrocybe miniata* or related taxa is not described in the recent monographs on European wax caps (Arnolds 1990, Boertmann 1995, Bon 1990, Candusso 1997). As it is very distinct, we propose to describe it as a new form:

Hygrocybe miniata f. *albida* f. nov.

A typo differt absentia solitorum colorum (luteus vel aurantius vel ruber). Holotypus: Belgica, Rijkevorsel, "De Volharding", 3.xi.2005, inter muscos (Polypodium) graminisque. Walley R. 4137 (GENT).

The greyish tinges on the cap are particularly interesting, as blackish or dark scales are also present and characteristic for the related species *Hygrocybe coccineocrenata* and *H. helobia*. Only Arnolds (1990) mentions that old basidiocarps of *Hygrocybe miniata* can have pale greyish brown scales. In our collections the cap part of one specimen with a greyish cap that was covered with a grass leaf appeared almost white when this grass was removed. This fact, together with the observed variable

intensity of the greyish tinges on the cap suggest that the expression of this pigments might be influenced by basidiocarp age and environmental conditions (such as light). In *Hygrocybe* subsection *Squamulosae* (Bataille) Singer dark cap scales are frequently used for identification. However, our observations put the taxonomical value of a taxon as *Hygrocybe coccineocrenata* var. *sphagnophila*, a variant that should be characterised by yellowish scales turning greyish at last in stead of brown or blackish scales, into question. Some authors have some doubts about the specific differences between *Hygrocybe coccineocrenata* and *H. cantharellus* (Boertmann 1995, Walley 2005). According to the literature data *Hygrocybe cantharellus* mainly differs from the former by the concolorous scales, as some other differences as habitat and lamellae seem not very reliable. Based on our observations on *Hygrocybe miniata* f. *albida*, it could be questioned if the visible presence of dark pigments in the scales are a good character for distinguishing these two species or other taxa in this group.

References

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