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Characterization of Bacteria Associated with Pinewood Nematode *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*.

Author(s): Vicente, Claudia S L; Nascimento, Francisco; Espada, Margarida; Barbosa, Pedro; Mota, Manuel; Glick, Bernard R; Oliveira, Solange

Source: PloS one **Volume:** 7 **Issue:** 10 **Pages:** e46661 **DOI:** 10.1371/journal.pone.0046661 **Published:** 2012 (Epub 2012 Oct 16)

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Abstract: PINE WILT DISEASE (PWD) IS A COMPLEX DISEASE INTEGRATING THREE MAJOR AGENTS: the pathogenic agent, the pinewood nematode *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*; the insect-vector *Monochamus* spp.; and the host pine tree, *Pinus* sp. Since the early 80's, the notion that another pathogenic agent, namely bacteria, may play a role in PWD has been gaining traction, however the role of bacteria in PWD is still unknown. The present work supports the possibility that some *B. xylophilus*-associated bacteria may play a significant role in the development of this disease. This is inferred as a consequence of: (i) the phenotypic characterization of a collection of 35 isolates of *B. xylophilus*-associated bacteria, in different tests broadly used to test plant pathogenic and plant growth promoting bacteria, and (ii) greenhouse experiments that infer the pathogenicity of these bacteria in maritime pine, *Pinus pinaster*. The results illustrate the presence of a heterogeneous microbial community associated with *B. xylophilus* and the traits exhibited by at least, some of these bacteria, appear to be related to PWD symptoms. The inoculation of four specific *B. xylophilus*-associated bacteria isolates in *P. pinaster* seedlings resulted in the development of some PWD symptoms suggesting that these bacteria likely play an active role with *B. xylophilus* in PWD.

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