DOI : 10.33451/florafauna.v25i1pp19-25

FLORA AND FAUNA ISSN 2456 - 9364 (Online)

2019 Vol. 25 No. 1 PP 19-25 ISSN 0971 - 6920 (Print)

Determination of *Coprophilous* fungal species and their diversity on the dung substrates

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Received **:** 22.04.2019; ***Accepted*** : 10.05.2019

ABSTRACT

Coprophils represent a diverse community of morphologically and physiologically specialised mycota which provides a biological force for the decomposition and recycling of animal faeces. Hence in the present investigation 12 fungal species were isolated from 3 herbivorous animal dung samples (Cow, Horse and Goat) collected from 3 areas (Rahuri, Sangamner and Shrirampur Tahsils). In that 6 microfungi and 4 macrofungi were observed. In the present study, 12 species of coprophilous fungi belonged to 3 classes. The majority of isolated species were belonging to Ascomycetes (05) followed by Basidiomycetes (04) and Zygomycetes (03) species. The highest number of isolated species were found associated with domestic Cow dung samples while minimal number with goat dung samples.

Figures : 18 References : 20 Table : 01

KEY WORDS : Coprophils, Herbivorous animal dung samples,

Introduction

The coprophilous fungi are the dung-loving fungi. The undigested carbohydrates, hemi-celluloses and lignin, alongwith amino acids, vitamins, growth factors and minerals in the herbivore dung, aid colonisation and growth of diverse fungi[1]. Coprophils represent a diverse community of morphologically and physiologically specialised mycota which provide a biological force for the decomposition and recycling of animal faeces.

The varying fungal components of animal dung are difficult to relate to a specific cause; many fungal conidia are ingested by herbivorous animals while grazing[14]. Coprophilous fungi exist in a broad range of habitats, fulfilling significant roles in a diversity of ecosystems.

Fig. 1 *: Pilobolus* sp.
(Sporangium with Black Cap)

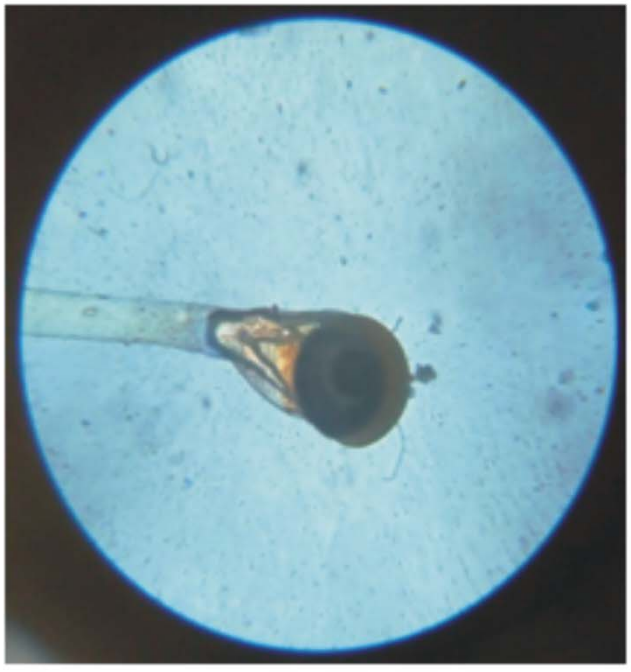

Fig. 2 : *Pilobolus* sp.
(Sporangiophore)

TABLE-1 : Fungi on different dung samples.

Sr. No.	Name of Fungi	Dung Samples of			
		Cow		Horse	Goat
		Domestic	Stray	(Domestic)	(Domestic)
1.	*Pilobolus*	+	-	-	+
2.	*Parasola*	-	-	+	-
3.	*Mucor*	+	+	+	+
4.	*Rhizopus*	+	-	-	-
5.	*Panaeolus*	-	-	+	-
6.	*Podospora*	+	-	-	-
7.	*Chaetomium*	-	+	-	-
8.	*Ascobolus*	-	+	-	-
9.	*Cheilymenia*	+	-	-	-
10.	*Coprinellus*	-	-	+	-
11.	*Unidentified*	+	-	-	-
12.	***Unidentified***	**+**	**-**	**-**	**-**

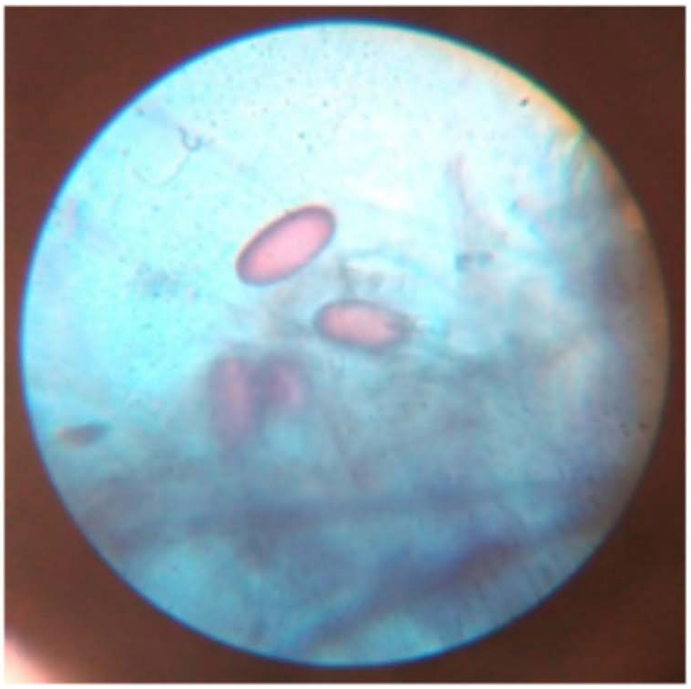

Fig. 3 :*Podospora* sp. (Ascospores X100)

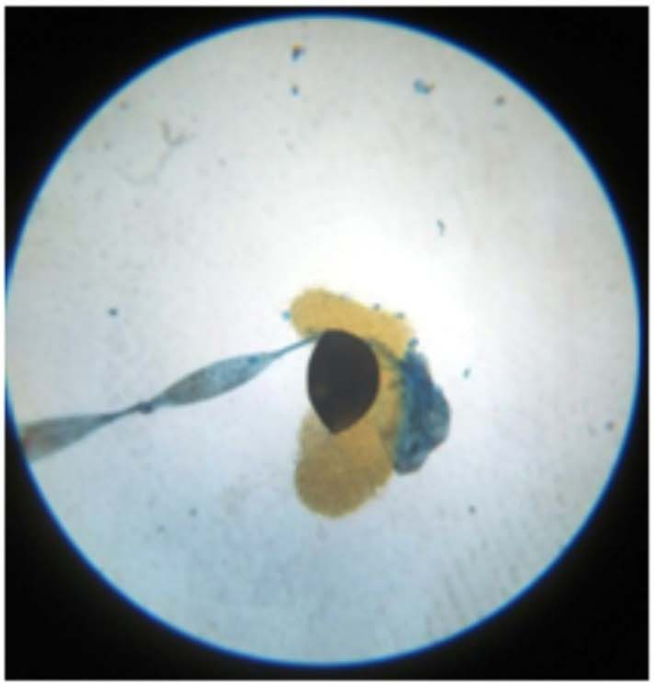

Fig. 4 :*Rhizopus stolonifer* (*Sporangium* and *Sporangiophore*)

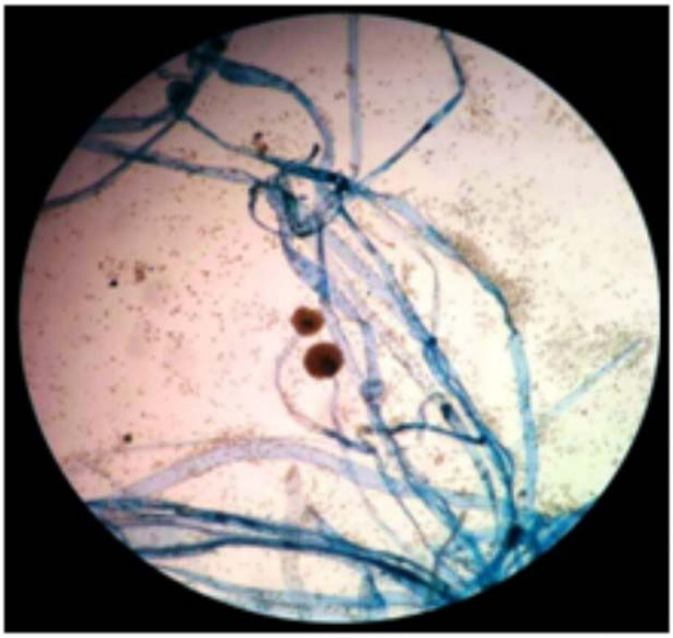

Fig. 5 : *Rhizopus* sp. (Sporangium and Rhizoids X45)

Fig. 6 : *Unidentified* sp.

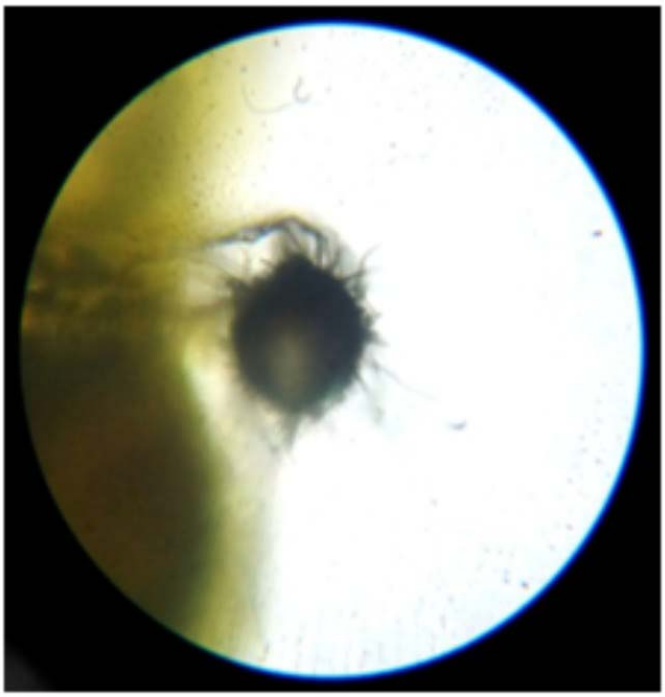

Fig. 7 *: Chaetomium* sp. (Perithecium X100)

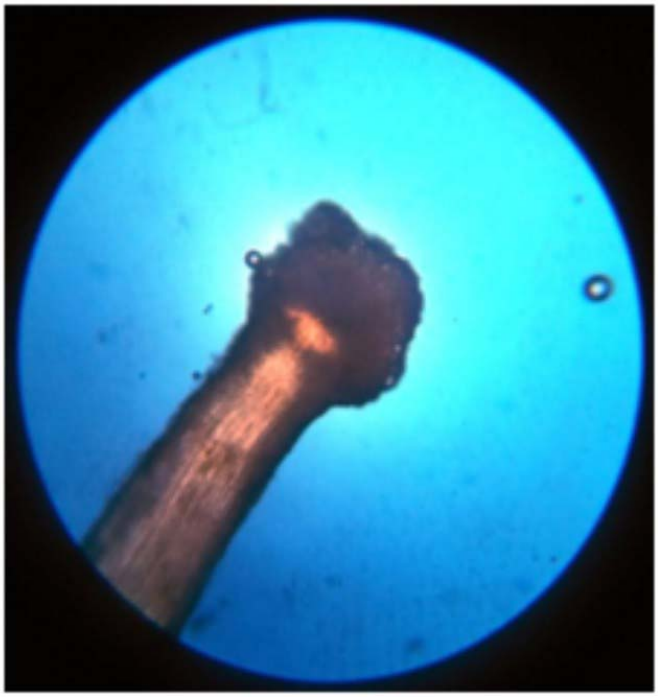

Fig. 8 : Unidentified sp.

These are a subgroup of saprophytic fungi that can inhabit faeces, most commonly herbivore faeces. The waste products of the digestive processes, herbivore faeces are predominantly composed of the most recalcitrant and indigestible parts of the plants; the cell wall polymers cellulose, hemi-celluloses and lignin. Therefore the potential for the secretomes of coprophilous fungi to contain novel enzymes for efficient plant cell wall degradation is high.

Dung contains a large quantity of readily available nutrients such as carbohydrates, high nitrogen content, vitamins and growth factors[13]. Some physicochemical factors such as temperature and moisture content, pH, stage of decay and type of animal have profound influence on dung mycobiota. Hence efforts were made to observe the different types of coprophilous fungi found on domestic as well as stray dung samples.

Materials and Methods

Dung samples were collected from domestic and stray animals, during the study period. The animals were namely Cow(*Bos taurus),* Horse(*Equus caballus*) and Goat(*Capra aegagrus hirctus*). Most of these dung

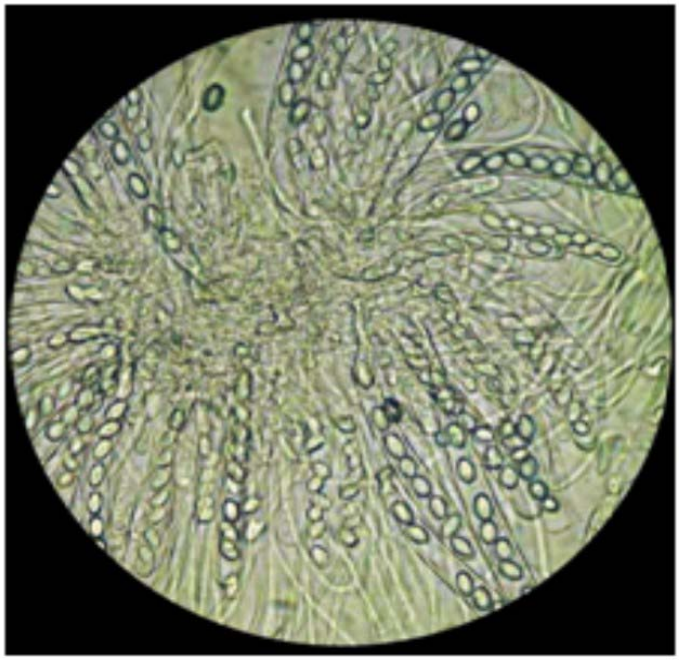

Fig. 9 *: Ascobolus* sp. (Mature apothecium X100)

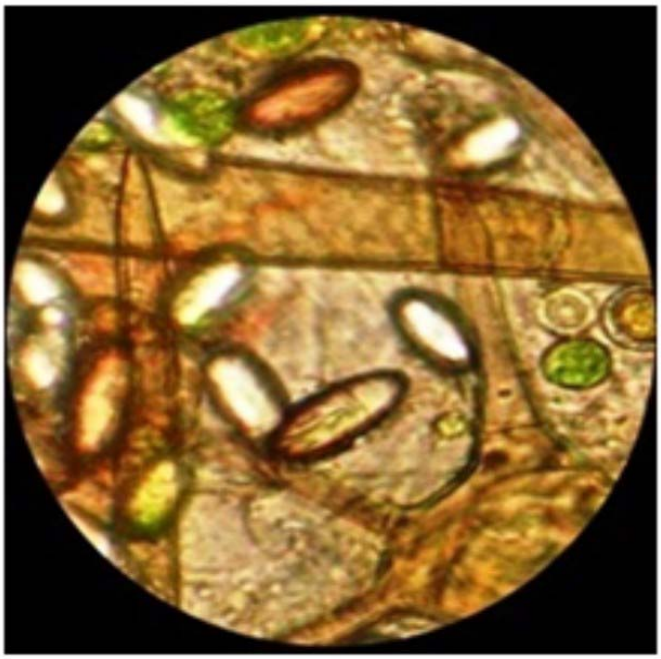

Fig. 10 *: Cheilymenia* sp. (Marginal hairs)

Specimen found on different dung samples

Fig. 11 : *Ascobolus* sp. (Fruiting Bodies)

Fig. 12 : *Parasola* sp. (Fruiting Body)

Fig. 13 : *Panaeolus* sp. (Fruiting Bodies)

Fig. 14 : *Coprinellus* sp. (Fruiting Bodies*)*

Colonies Appeared on Dung samples after Incubation

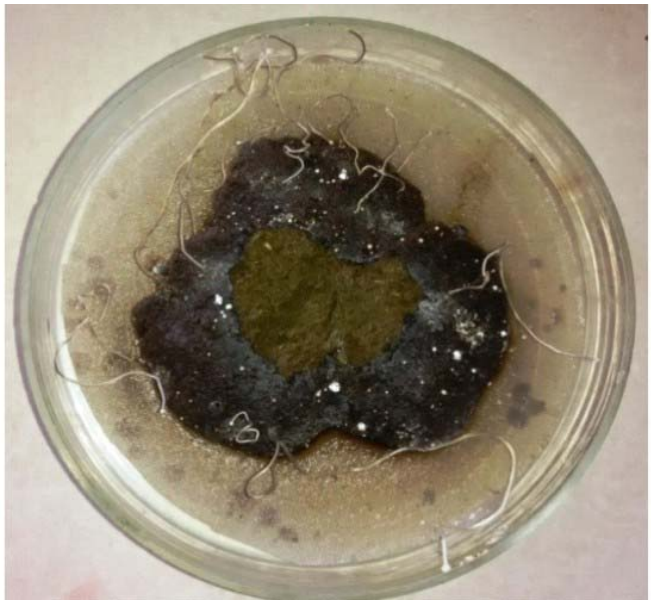

Fig. 15 :Showing Colonies of (*Pilobolus* sp.)

Fig. 16 :Showing magnified Colonies of (*Pilobolus* sp.)

Fig. 17 :Showing Colonies of (*Pilobolus* sp. and *Mucor* sp.)

Fig. 18 :Showing Colonies of (*Pilobolus* Sp. and *Chaetomium* sp.)

samples were collected from different localities *i.e.* from Shrirampur, Rahuri and Sangamner Tahsil. Each dung sample was collected in a clean, air tight polythene bag and taken to the laboratory.The dung samples were subjected to isolation and enumeration of saprophytic and coprophilous fungi by moist chamber method[6]. Each dung samples of the domesticated and stray animals was kept in moist chamber plates equidistantly with wide space for the growth of fungi. The samples were incubated for 5 to 10 days at 25±3ºC temperature for fungal growth and their sporulation. The moist chamber plates don't need any special type of medium for the growth of saprophytic as well as coprophilous fungi on the dung samples. In this method the fungi grew on its own on the host *i.e.* dung. All the plates were incubated at 25±3ºC temperature in the incubation chamber in dark conditions.

The fungal slide mounts were carefully observed under a transmitted light binocular microscope and all diagnostic features were noticed and noted down. Identification of the isolated fungi was made based on the morphological characteristics, such as colour, texture, appearance. The fungal mycelia and spores were lifted carefully using a sterilised fine tipped needle from the dung surface and observed under a compound microscope and binocular light microscope. The fungal genera were

identified possibly upto genus level on morphology of fungal structures under compound microscope and binocular microscope and were subsequently confirmed by consulting with experts and relevant literature.

Moist chamber Method[6] : Large-sized (20 cm diam) Petri-plates were used in this method. The basal lid, lined with a thin layer of absorbent cotton and superimposed by a blotting paper, was flooded with tap water. Excess water was drained off. The blotting paper was lined by 2-3 glass slides. The moist chamber was sterilized in autoclave at 15lb/psi and 121ºC temperature for 15m. The dung samples were placed in the moist chamber and labelled appropriately. The plates were incubated at 23-25ºC in the laboratory, near a day light illumination. The plates were examined at regular intervals from the second day onwards, for the fungi appearing from time to time. In this method, 100% moisture trapped inside the chamber and ambient temperature provided optimal condition for growth of the resident fungi.

Results and Discussions

From this study, it was established that animal dungs are the good substrates for the production of coprophilous fungi. A total of 12 sps. of coprophilous fungi were obtained, out of which 8 are microfungi and 4 were macrofungi supported by 2017. The difference in number and type of fungi isolated is probably reflections of physiochemical and type of plant species consumed by these animals. The factors affecting diversity of coprophilous mycoflora are nutritional factors, ecological factors, pH, aeration, moisture content, temperature, light periodicity, competition, predation *etc.*

Considering the importance of these fungi, some are edible; some of them are poisonous, while some are enzyme producers. As saphrotrophs, they play a significant role in decomposition of organic matters, hence measuring, soil fertility. They are used in the production of drugs in pharmaceuticals and also employed in textile industries for their secretome producing activity. Simply, coprophilous fungi play an important role in the ecosystems, being responsible for the recycling of nutrients in the animal dungs. Domestic cow dung showed higher diversity of coprophilous fungi than stray cow dung sample and domestic horse and goat dung sample collected from different places *i.e.* from Rahuri and SangamnerTahsil; these results were supported by earlier workers. The food performance and feeding habit of the animals may play a role in the determination of the fungal species composition and their diversity on the dung substrates.

In the present study, generally, coprophilous fungi showed a high diversity, occurrence and richness on samples collected from July to March months, revealing fungi such as *Pilobolus*sp., *Ascobolus*sp., *Parasola*sp., *Chaetomium*sp., *Cheilymenia*sp., *Coprinellus*sp., *Panaeolus* sp., *Podospora* sp., *Rhizopus*sp. and *Mucor*sp. were obtained.

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