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## *Banksiamyces toomansis*

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Species of *Banksiamyces* are small, stalked, disc-shaped fungi that grow specifically on cones of species of *Banksia*. *Banksiamyces toomansis* appears to be the most common species; here it is growing on *Banksia quercifolia* cones. Despite the large number of *Banksias* in Western Australia, *Banksiamyces* do not appear to be common, or perhaps it is because they are easily overlooked. Fruit bodies persist for some time and have the capacity to dry out in unfavourable conditions (*inset above: Banksiamyces* sp. on *Banksia sphaerocarpa*) to resurrect during periods of suitable moisture (*main photo*). In the southwest, the best time to find them in the fully expanded state is late winter to early spring.

*Banksia toomansis* discs range from 2–5mm in diameter and are generally dark charcoal-grey to light grey in colour. Stems are about 5mm long, and generally lighter in colour. The fruit bodies are difficult to see in the dried state. A number of other species have been described, but all look very similar and are difficult to distinguish. Some species are specific to the *Banksia* host, but *Banksiamyces toomansis* appears to grow on a number of different *Banksias*.

The scientific name refers to its host and locality where it was first collected in the early 1880s: *Banksia*-: refers to the host plant species, *myc*-: fungus or mushroom, i.e. 'banksia fungus', *toomansis*: after the Tooma River in southern NSW.