Amauroderma specimens were found in southwest Florida during August 2016. They grew in association with Laurel Oak (Quercus laurifolia). The specimens resemble Ganoderma and especially Humphreya coffeata, though they are smaller, more petite, and delicate. Also unlike Ganoderma which fruit directly from wood, these specimens grew terrestrially from rich soil mixed with decayed hardwood debris. Fresh samples were collected, dehydrated, and then shipped to the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, care of Josef Vlasák who is a specialist with determining polypores. They were deposited in the herbaria PRM (National Museum Prague, Mycological Department, accession PRM 944385), NY (New York Botanical Garden, Steere Herbarium), and also FLAS (University of Florida, Mycological Herbarium).

The resultant morphological identification was Amauroderma sprucei (Pat.) Torrend, based on small pores (5-6 per mm), round echinulate spores (about 9µm in diameter), and white interior context. The DNA sequence of rRNA ITS region from the collection was very similar but not identical (97% of sequence identity) to A. sprucei collections from Brazil present in GenBank. Nevertheless, two other “A. sprucei” sequences in GenBank, also from Brazil, were completely different. This indicates again that taxonomy of Amauroderma is far from being settled. According to Furtado (1981), Amauroderma sprucei (and similar A. shomburgkii [Mont. & Berk.] Torrend differing only in brownish context) belong to most common Amauroderma species and have a wide distribution in tropical countries ranging from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

Amauroderma is a genus of polypores within the family Ganodermataceae. The primary difference between Amauroderma (Amauro-, meaning dark or dusky, and -derma meaning skin) and Ganoderma (Gano-, meaning shiny) is with the basidiospore characteristics. Amauroderma has round spores with spines which are sometimes quite coarse, while Ganoderma have ellipsoid, truncate spores with spines (Ryvarden, 2004). Humphreya coffeata...
Amauroderma species (and also very similar H. coffeatum) are widely distributed in American tropics and show mostly slender, stipitate fruitbodies with small caps and stipes covered with brownish tomentum. In the available keys (e.g. Ryvarden, 2004), their determination was based mostly on pore and spore size; the delimitation and distribution of most species is however poorly known. From 21 American species treated in Ryvarden (2004), 8 were collected only once or twice, which throws doubts on reliability of taxonomical traits used for determination. Gomes-Silva et al. (2015) revealed several previous misdeterminations in Amauroderma, added 6 more newly discovered species from Brazil, and attempted broadly based molecular phylogeny with the result that polyphyletic nature of Amauroderma is probable, because many Amauroderma sequences are more close to species of Ganoderma than to other Amauroderma.

Amauroderma species are typical tropical fungi, never previously collected in the USA according to the current checklist of North American polypores (Zhou et al., 2016).

References Cited