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## Visitors to the Farlow from Winter 2013 - Fall 2014

We had several visitors to the Farlow over the past several months, including **Otto Miettinen** from Clark University in Worcester (by way of Helsinki) to look at polypore types, **Jay Cordeiro** from the New England Natural History Museum, **Kendra Driscoll**, **Karen Vanderwolf** and **Donald McAlpine** of the New Brunswick Museum to look at lichens, and **Valter Rossi** of the University of L'Aquila visited us again to work with Danny Haelewaters on Thaxter's Laboulbeniales.

## Thaxter's Treasure Trove

by Danny Haelewaters

The earliest observations on the Laboulbeniales took place in the 1840s (Rouget 1850), but it was not until Roland Thaxter's [1858-1932] research that they were studied in depth. In 1890 he published the first in a series of twenty-one non-illustrated papers describing hundreds of new species. Although he characterized 1,260 species\*, many other undescribed species are left behind in his enormous permanent slide collection of over 10,000 slides. This is mostly because he was unable to finish his work; he died before being able to publish a sixth volume of his monograph that was intended as a comprehensive treatment of the genus *Laboulbenia*. Recent interest in Thaxter's

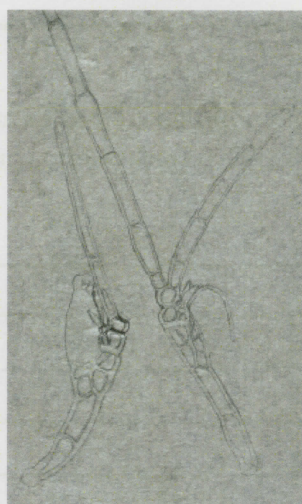


Figure 1. While Roland Thaxter left no manuscript behind for this final, sixth volume, his hand-drawn sketches are part of the archives of the Farlow Reference Library of Cryptogamic Botany. This is a scan of Thaxter's original sketch of *Laboulbenia* sp. nov. on *Curculio*. Image courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

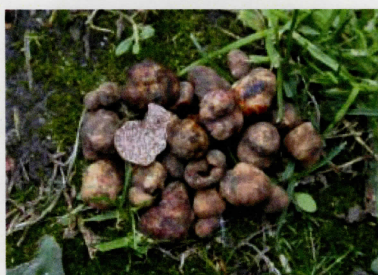
slides at the Farlow Herbarium resulted in the description of several new species of *Laboulbenia* on carabid (*L. poplitea*), erotyloid (*L. erotylaria*), and chrysomelid hosts (*L. bilobata*, *L. longipilis*, *L. pfisteri*) (Haelewaters and Rossi 2014, Haelewaters and Yaakop in press). Further examination revealed yet another undescribed species of *Laboulbenia* on *Curculio* sp. (family Curculionidae) from Cameroon (Figure 1) and a beautiful new species of *Zodionomyces* on a "hydrophilid" beetle from Trinidad (Haelewaters and colleagues in prep.).

\*Note that as of today there are 2,000 described species, not even double the number described by one man, our very own Roland Thaxter.

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*Newsletter of the* **FRIENDS**  
**OF THE**  
**FARLOW**

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Spring & Fall 2014

G. E. Tocci, Interim Editor  
D. Haelewaters, Assistant Editor

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### **90 Years of the Farlow**

by Donald H. Pfister, Asa Gray Professor of Systematic Botany,  
Curator of the Farlow Library and Herbarium

I remember clearly my first visit to the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany. I was in my third year of graduate studies at Cornell and had made the trip to Cambridge to consult the herbarium. The place was hard to find. Indeed, standing in front of the Harvard University Herbaria building, I asked a passerby where the herbarium was despite the signage on the front of the building – that I missed too – and the person had no idea where it was. A well kept secret then, and what a secret it remains.

On entering the building I was taken by the beautiful Reading Room. I signed the guest book and joined the army of mycologists, lichenologists, bryologists, and phycologists from the past who had visited and used the collection. Then of course there are those collections. I was far enough along in my thesis research that I thought there would be a few items to see, but little did I suspect the range of specimens and data that awaited me. What is perhaps even more exciting is that I can say even today there are surprises and wonders that I encounter as I delve into various parts of the herbarium and the library. Even at 90 the place has not given

up all its treasures.

The first signature in the guest register is that of Lilian Horsford Farlow. Although W. G. Farlow had died in 1919, the formal opening was in 1924. In that interval a building was prepared, the old Divinity School Library with its classrooms and offices; books were catalogued; an addition to the building was erected to house the specimens; new cabinets were installed and materials were moved from Farlow's home and from the Botanical Museum, previously home of the Cryptogamic Laboratory. One might think or hope that such transformations came naturally at a place like Harvard, but then, as now, this was not the case. First, there was debate about where on the campus the library and herbarium could be housed according to terms of Farlow's will. Then came the work of fitting out and relocating. Orchestrating all of this was Roland Thaxter, Farlow's student and long-term colleague. Thaxter raised the money needed for the renovations, and he had in this a partner, Mrs. Farlow. She set funds aside to purchase items for the library and another fund was established to bind journals. Thaxter solicited funds and succeeded in obtaining an en-

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**Special Farlow Lecture on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Crowdsourcing  
Workshop on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. See page 9 for details!**

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