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FICIDAE



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THE GENUS *FICUS* IN THE WESTERN ATLANTIC

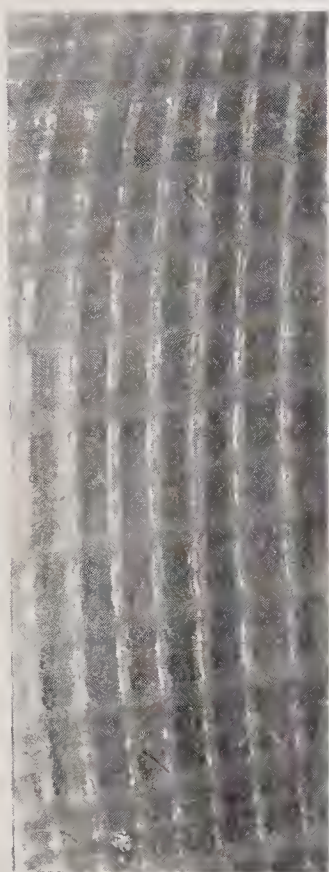
BY
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The genus *Ficus* (fig or pear shells) is rather widely distributed throughout the tropical and south temperate portions of the globe. As a rule specimens would appear to be rather rare with the exception, perhaps, of those of our own species, *F. papyratus*, which is quite abundant especially along the west Florida coast between Pavilion Key and the Cedar Keys. There are now eighteen species and subspecies known, three of these occurring in the Western Atlantic. Two of the latter are known only from deep water. This genus has long been known under the name of *Pyrula* Lamarek (*Pirula*) but unfortunately Röding's name, *Ficus*, has one year priority.

Ficus Röding

Ficus Röding 1798, Museum Boltenianum, p. 148 (Sherborn and Sykes reprint, 1906).

Shell fig or pear shaped, rather thin but strong, highly glazed within, outer surface moderately sculptured with rather fine axial and spiral ridges, usually forming a reticulated surface. Color generally a dull brownish or grayish white which is not always regularly suffused throughout the shell. Normally there is a series of dots or blotches and even of



Sculpture, five times natural size.



Ficus papyratus Say Natural size.

bands of darker color which are spirally arranged. Soft parts of the animal extend and nearly envelop the shell, foot capable of great expansion. No operculum.

***Ficus papyratus* Say**

Pyrula papyratia Say June, 1822, Jour. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila. **2**, p. 238 (Georgia and East Florida).

Pyrula reticulata Lamarek August, 1822, Anim. s. Vert. **7**, p. 141, no. 9 (Indian Ocean).

Pyrula fortior Mörch 1877, Malak. Blätt. **24**, p. 43 (Antilles; Campeche [Mexico]).

Description. Shell 60 to 100 mm. in length, thin but strong and generally evenly and moderately sculptured. Whorls 4 to 5, regularly increasing in size and strongly convex. Color a dull pinkish or whitish brown, not always evenly disposed but occasionally somewhat mottled owing to the uneven disposition of the darker brown color deposited on the inside of the whorls. Spirally arranged spots are sometimes present though they are usually small and faint. Interior of aperture glazed brown usually well below the lip margin. Inner or parietal wall thinly glazed. Outer edge thin, not produced to form a definite lip. Aperture subovate, and nearly as long as the shell and extending below to include the canal. Spire depressed, sometimes to the extent that the shell is flattened on top. Nuclear whorls smooth, following whorls reticulated by the crossing of axial and spiral ridges or cross threads. Spiral threads generally a little stronger, especially every second or fourth thread. Occasionally irregular growth ridges are present which are usually a little thickened on the inner side of the whorls.

	length	width	whorls
(large)	95	53 mm.	4½ Sanibel Id., Florida
(average)	75	55	4½ Bonita Springs, Florida

Types. Neoholotype, Acad. Nat. Sci., Phila. No. 39373, St. Augustine, Florida (here selected by H. A. Pilsbry). Swift collection, W. Stimpson collector. Length 86.3; width 39 mm. (Say's original type is lost.)

Remarks. This species cannot be confused with any other in the Western Atlantic as it is the only shallow water *Ficus* in this area. It is generally distributed along the coast but rather uncommon other than on the coast of Florida. Though listed as occurring in the West Indies, the only specific record that we have been able to obtain is that of Grand Bahama Island listed below.

Range. North Carolina south to Venezuela along the coast.

*Records.*¹ NORTH CAROLINA: Beaufort (ANSP); Cape Lookout (USNM). SOUTH CAROLINA: Bird Key, Ball's Bay; Isle of Palms; Magnolia Beach; Sullivan's Id., Charleston (all CM). FLORIDA: St. Augustine (MCZ; ANSP); Miami (USNM); Key West; Pavilion Key; Sanibel Id.; Cedar Keys (all MCZ); Crooked Id., Calhoun Co., Santa Rosa Id. (all ANSP). TEXAS: (MCZ). MEXICO: Progresso; Silan (all ANSP). VENEZUELA: Maracaibo (ANSP). BAHAMA IDS. East End Bush, Gd. Bahama Id. (MCZ).

The references below are for the two deep water forms.

Ficus howelli Cl. and Ag. 1940, Mem. Soc. Cubana Hist. Nat. **14**, p. 85, pl. 14, fig. 2 (Bahia de Cochinos, Santa Clara Prov., Cuba). Dredged by the "Atlantis," station no. 3332, in 175-225 fathoms, 1939. Holotype, MCZ, no. 135140.

Ficus atlanticus Cl. and Ag. 1940, Mem. Soc. Cubana Hist. Nat. **14**, p. 85, pl. 14, fig. 1 (off Sao Salvador, Bahia, Brasil; S. Lat. 11° 49'; W. Long. 37° 10'). Dredged by the "Hassler," station no. 12, in 450 to 500 fathoms, 1872. Holotype, MCZ, no. 104657.

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Bayer, C., 1939: Catalogue of the Pirulidae in the Rijksmuseum Van Natuurlijke Historie. Zoologische Mededeelingen **21**, pp. 369-383.

Smith, E. A., 1894: A list of the Recent Species of the Genus of Pirula Lamarek. Jour. of Malacology **3**, pp. 64-69.

¹ ANSP (Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila.); CM (Charleston Mus.); MCZ (Mus. Comp. Zoöl.); USNM (United States Nat. Mus.).