

**BRETTIELLA CULMOSA SP. NOV.**  
(Fig. 5B,C)

*Material*

Holotype: NHM 1998.8.4.53, Erakor Island reef flat, Efate, Vanuatu, 11.11.1992.

Paratypes: NHM 1998.8.4.54, NHM 1998.8.4.273, 274, NHM 1998.8.4.322, same locality and collection data as holotype.

*Description*

Colony repent; each autozoid supported above the substratum by a rhizoid produced from its basal surface; translucent straw yellow when dried. Autozooids large (Holotype,  $0.65\text{--}0.75 \times 0.15\text{--}0.18$  mm), claviform, widening distally, with extensive oval opesia and frontal membrane; proximally narrow and tubular. Autozooids arise distobasally from preceding zoid. Branches originate either left or right of the main axis, the most proximal zoid of a new branch arises laterobasally towards the distal end of the parent zoid. No ovicells or ancestrula observed.

*Etymology*

From *culmosus*, L.—strawlike. Alluding to the colour when dried.

*Remarks*

*Brettiella culmosa* differs from *Brettiella ovicellata* Gordon, 1984, the only other species in this genus, mainly in its size; autozooids of *B. culmosa* are almost twice as long as those of *B. ovicellata* whilst having a similar width. Additionally, the proximal end of the opesia in *B. culmosa* is bounded by a U-shaped border of cryptocyst, while the proximal edge of the gymnocyst is distinctly V-shaped.

*Distribution*

*Brettiella culmosa* was found only at Erakor Island but, owing to its inconspicuous appearance and cryptic habitat, it is probable that this species has been overlooked elsewhere and will be recorded from a broader geographical area. As well as loose fragments, a single colony was found in a cryptic area of a small coral boulder, associated with *Beania hexamicorum*.

