

Appollinaris Semenovich Bondartsev (1877 – 1968)

Appollinaris Semenovich Bondartsev (or in German, Apollinari Semyonovich Bondarzew) was born on 5 August 1877 in the central Russian city of Kursk, to a noble family of modest means. After finishing school in Kursk he studied agricultural sciences at Riga Polytechnic, where his mycological research was encouraged. His first scientific paper, on parasitic fungi of cultivated and wild plants in the Riga area, was published in 1903, the year he graduated. Working initially as assistant district agronomist, in 1905 he was recommended for a position at the Central Phytopathological Station at the botanical gardens in St Petersburg (Leningrad). In 1913 he became head of the department, and when it was incorporated into the Botanical Institute in 1931, he continued as director of the mycology section until its closure in 1950, but did further research there until his official retirement in 1965.



Bondarzewia berkeleyi

Bondarzewia is a widely distributed genus of four species of fungi. The type species, *Bondarzewia montana* is a large, beautiful and rare fungus that fruits in North America's Pacific northwest, while *Bondarzewia berkeleyi* occurs east of the Rockies and has also been recorded in Japan, China, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and New Zealand. *Bondarzewia guaitecasensis* is found in South America, and a fourth species, *B. podocarp*, which grows on podocarp trees in China's Hainan island and province, was described as recently as 2010.

His work was both scientific and practical. It included studying the powdery mildews of hops and gooseberries, as well as diseases of clover and other plants caused by pathogens, many of which he was the first to describe. He also investigated the possibility of using fungi for biological plant protection or control. He regularly visited different regions of European Russia, the Caucasus and the Urals, collecting data, instructing agronomists and testing fungicides, and in 1912 published his findings in what was for many decades the only Russian textbook on plant pathology. He accompanied herbarium specimens with descriptions and drawings of plant parasites, and responded to numerous inquiries through scientific and popular journals.

At the same time he began investigating the wood-rotting fungi, including those affecting man-made structures; his first paper on the polypores of Kursk province was published in 1908. At first he consulted well-known authorities, and from 1935 to 1941 he worked in collaboration with German-born mycologist Rolf Singer who had fled Nazi Germany and was in Leningrad as senior scientific expert at the botanical garden of the Academy of Sciences. In a revision of the classification of Polyporaceae, Singer placed Berkeley's polypore in the new genus *Bondarzewia*, which together with the family Bondarzewiaceae, he named in honour of his Russian colleague. Bondartsev's subsequent *Polyporaceae of European USSR and the Caucasus* (1953), which was translated into English in 1961, marked the peak of his scientific career.

Appollinaris Semenovich Bondartsev married twice. His first wife Vera Nikolaevna Bondartseva-Monteverde was a daughter of the principal botanist of the Imperial Botanical Garden. Encouraged by her husband, Vera became a mycologist and worked successfully on parasitic fungi until her death from cancer in 1944. Their daughter Margarita Bondartseva, born in 1936, became an eminent mycologist also. Bondartsev's second wife, a professional singer, supported him in his work and shared his love of art, drama and music. Bondartsev remained in Leningrad during the Second World War, continuing his work and suffering with other citizens the privations of the siege, and was later awarded the Defence of Leningrad medal. Other decorations included the Order of Lenin – a rare honour for one who was not a member of the communist party. He died in Leningrad on 24 November 1968, aged 91.