

Mercedesia Thomsen & Østergaard (2015)

Diagnosis: Small biflagellate coccolithophorids with a short haptonema. Nannoliths monomorphic and star-shaped (triradiate). A lamina sometimes fills the spaces between the three rays of the stellate nannolith. Small organic underlayer scales not observed.

Type species: *Mercedesia aspiphora* sp. nov.

Etymology: '*Mercedesia*' is used here because of the reminiscence to the three-pointed star in the centre piece of the Mercedes-Benz logo.

Mercedesia is a highly distinct genus that cannot be confused with any extant coccolithophorid taxon. Triradiate stellate nannoliths are known from the geological record, e.g. *Discoaster triradiatus* Tan (Young 1998) and *Marthasterites tribrachiatus* (Bramlette & Riedel) Deflandre (Black 1968). Apart from the morphological differences there is also a profound tenfold size difference between these nannofossils and the nannoliths of the type species *M. aspiphora* and the other species, rendering a direct relationship very unlikely. The calcified nature of the *Mercedesia* coccosphere has been verified by an X-ray elemental analysis of the periplast (Thomsen *et al.* 1988).

Thomsen, H. A., & Østergaard, J. B. 2015. Coccolithophorids in polar waters: *Mercedesia* gen. nov., *Ericiolus*, *Quaternariella* and *Porsildia* gen. nov. *Acta Protozoologica*, **54(3)**: 155-169.