**Supplementary Table 9.** Ontogenetic sequences derived from different multivariate analyses of histological characters, and the ultimate ontogenetic sequence established by means of summarized ranks of specimens over all sequences. Rank-ordering followed the fractional ranking rules of non-parametric statistical methods. Specimens are referred to by 'sp.code number'.

Multivariate rank order of specimens								
Multivariate methods	sp.2	sp.7	sp.18	sp.26	sp.27	sp.37	sp.41	sp.42
PCA-4	7	3	1.5	6	4	5	1.5	8
PCA-7	8	3.5	1	5.5	3.5	5.5	2	7
PCA-8	8	3	1	6	4	5	2	7
NMDS-4	6	2.5	2.5	6	4	6	1	8
NMDS-7	6	2	2	6	2	6	2	8
NMDS-8	5	2	3	6.5	4	6.5	1	8
Mean ranks	6.67	2.67	1.83	6.00	3.58	5.67	1.58	7.67
SD	1.21	0.61	0.82	0.32	0.80	0.61	0.49	0.52
Rounded means	7	3	2	6	4	6	2	8
Summarized ranks	7	3	1.5	5.5	4	5.5	1.5	8
Multivariate sum rank order	sp.18 = sp.41 < sp.7 < sp.27 < sp.26 = sp.37 < sp.2 < sp.42							