

Grey blight disease of cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum* Bercht & Presl.) leaves

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ABSTRACT

A survey on diseases affecting cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) revealed the occurrence of grey blight of leaves caused by *Pestalotiopsis palmarum* in several parts of Kerala, India.

Key words: cinnamon, *Cinnamomum verum*, grey blight, *Pestalotiopsis palmarum*.

During a survey on diseases affecting cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum* Brecht & Presl.), a grey blight of leaves was observed during June-July in many parts of Kerala, India. The symptoms appeared as small yellow brown spots which later became whitish to grey with a dark brown border. The spots were oval in shape initially and later formed necrotic patches. The size of these patches varied from 14 to 42 mm in diameter. In advanced stages of infection, a major portion of the leaf lamina dried up and was blown away by wind. At the central portion of the necrotic patches, dark accervuli of the organism could be observed on the upper surface (Fig.1). Successful infections were obtained on injured leaves when inoculated with spore suspension and culture bits of the organism. It took 2 to 4 days to initiate

symptoms on injured detached leaves when sprayed with spore suspension and culture bits of the organism. The percentage infection ranged from 40 to 90% on injured attached and detached leaves. The organism thus isolated was identified as *Pestalotiopsis palmarum* (Cooke) Steyaert based on morphological characters (Sutton 1961, 1963; Mordue 1971). The same was confirmed by Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Kew, England and deposited in the CMI Herbarium (Herb IMI No. 247383). A leaf spot of cinnamon caused by *P. funerea* was earlier reported by Ciferri & Fragosa (1927) and another leaf spot and shot hole disease of *C. tamala* caused by *P. cinnamomum* was reported from Pakistan by Rahman (1971). However there is no previous record of *P. palmarum* on *C. verum*, and hence this constitutes a new record.

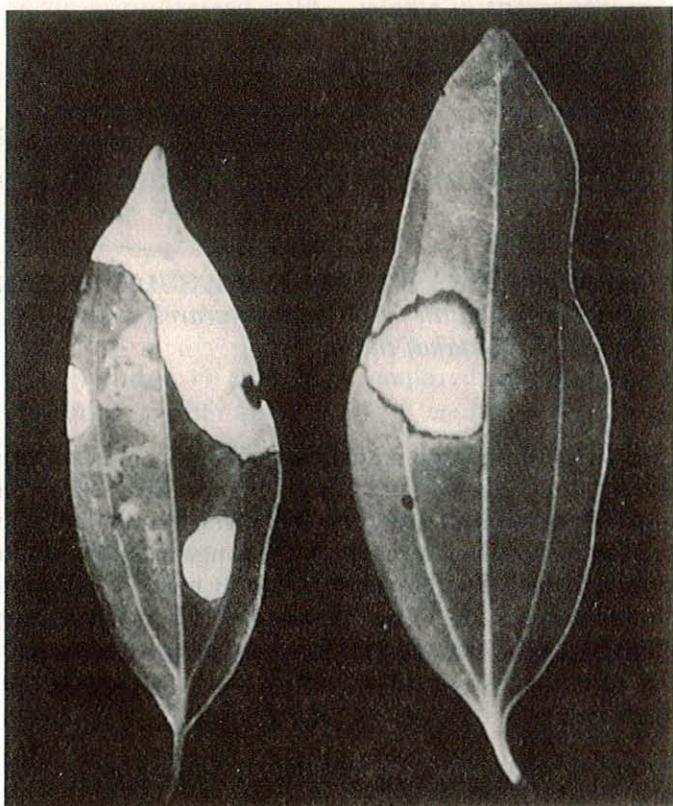


Fig.1. Symptoms of grey blight caused by *Pestalotiopsis palmarum* on cinnamon leaf

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