

Research Note

CURVULARIA LEAF SPOT OF COCONUT

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Leaf Blight disease of coconut is common in Sri Lanka where two fungi, viz., *Pestalozzia palmarum* Cooke and *Drechslera incurvata* (Ch. Bernard) M. B. Ellis, have been implicated. During a recent study in our laboratory, a species of *Curvularia* was consistently isolated from coconut leaves showing leaf spots collected from Bandrippuwa Estate, Lunuwila. Subsequently, diseased samples from Madampe and Weligama areas too yielded the same species of *Curvularia* recorded earlier. Although it was generally accepted that the leaf blight disease is caused by the two fungi mentioned earlier, it now appears that *Curvularia* can also cause considerable damage to coconuts.

Curvularia maculans (Bancroft) Boed. (now called *Curvularia eragrostidis* (P. Henn.) J. A. Meyer) and *Curvularia* sp. have been recorded from coconut in Malaysia and India respectively (Joseph and Radha, 1979). The species recorded from Sri Lanka is distinct from *C. eragrostidis* but is close to *C. lunata* (Wakker) Boed. (conidial state of *Cochliobolus lunatus*). This is the first record of *Curvularia* from coconut in Sri Lanka.

Under controlled conditions, necrotic spots appeared 3-5 days after inoculation of coconut seedlings. With time, these spots coalesced to form large brownish-grey patches (Fig. 1) from which the fungus was reisolated. The fungus sporulates readily in culture (Fig. 2).

Further work on this disease is in progress.

REFERENCES

- Joseph, T. and Radha, K. (1979). Coconut disease and quarantine regulations. *Technical document No: 118 of the Plant Protection Committee for the South East Asia and Pacific Region — FAO 14 p.*



Fig. 1. Coconut leaf with brownish -- grey patch caused by Curvularia sp.

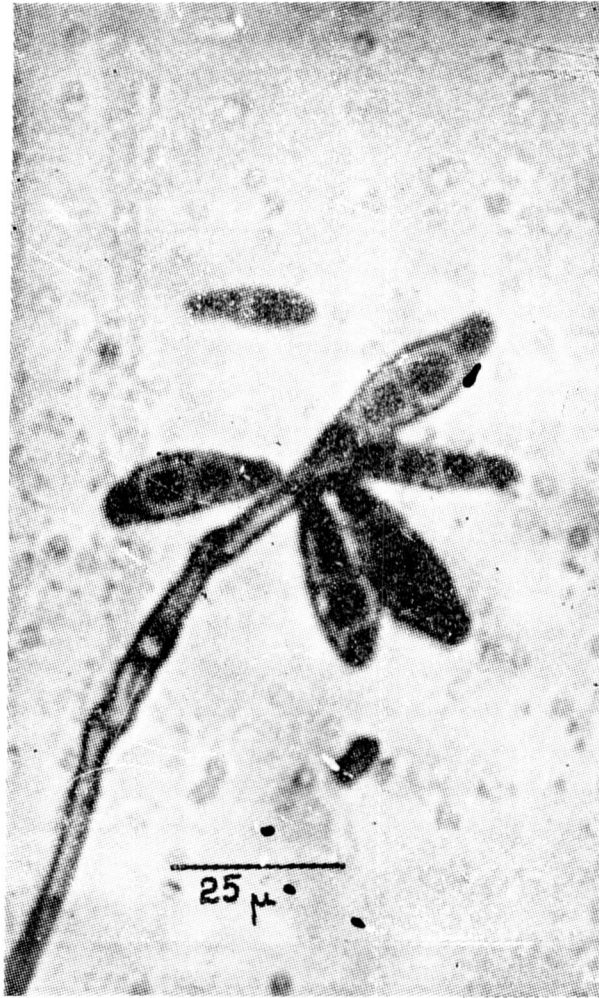


Fig. 2. Conidia of *Curvularia* sp.