

LEAF BLIGHT OF *EUCALYPTUS CITRIODORA* HOOK

Eucalyptus citriodora Hook is an important timber as well as medicinal plant, belonging to the family Myrtaceae. The oil extracted from its leaves has a number of medicinal uses and is an active ingredient of inhalants, soaps and sprays. Because of its pleasant odour and efficiency in killing bacteria, it is also used as an antiseptic (Penfold and Willis, 1961). Recently a serious leaf blight was observed on the plants growing in the forest plantations at Peringamala, Trivandrum district

The initial symptoms appeared as uniformly brown discoloured spots on the leaves. These spots are surrounded by narrow reddish brown margin. The spots often coalesce to form large brown lesions eventually causing curling and drying of the leaves.

Isolations made from the leaf spots on potato dextrose agar medium yielded the fungus *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* (Penz.) Penz and

Sacc. The mycelium of the fungus appeared white which became greyish after 3 to 5 days. The conidia are hyaline, one celled and cylindrical in shape with the presence of oil globule, measuring 9.3 to 12.4 μm x 3.1 to 6.2 μm .

The pathogenicity of the fungus was established by artificial inoculation on the leaves of *E. citriodora* with the conidial suspension prepared from 10-12 day old culture. Typical symptoms as those observed in nature are produced within 7-10 days after inoculation. The fungus isolated from artificially inoculated plants was identical to the original culture.

Colletotrichum gloeosporioides has been reported on *E. robusta* from China (Zhu, 1985) and *E. pellita* and *E. grandis* from Brazil (Dianese *et al.*, 1985). There is no record of this fungus causing leaf blight of *E. citriodora* in India.

College of Agriculture
Vellayani 695 522, Trivandrum, India

K. I. Wilson
D. Geetha, Halm George

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