

## LEAF ROT OF AFRICAN YAM (*DIOSCOREA ODONATA* L.)

During September-October 1995, a severe leaf rot was observed in African yam (*Dioscorea odonata* L.) grown in the crop museum of the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Trivandrum. The leaves of this plant is comparatively smaller compared to the long broad leaved local yams. On the leaves, water soaked grey white areas appeared, which spread very fast causing severe rotting of the leaves. Severe infection caused defoliation. On close observation, pale or straw coloured irregular sclerotia along with fungal mycelial mat were observed on the infected leaves (Fig 1). The isolation of the pathogen was made on potato dextrose agar. The straw coloured sclerotia with white mycelial mat appeared on the third day of inoculation. The sclerotia resembled typical to that of *Rhizoctonia solani* Kuhn. of paddy. *Rhizoctonia solani* causes a serious sheath blight of paddy in south Kerala.

The pathogenicity was proved by inoculating the dioscorea leaves with sclerotia and mycelial bits. Characteristic symptoms appeared on the fifth day of inoculation and re-isolation from the inoculated areas yielded the same type of *R. solani* Kuhn. The leaf rot caused by *R. solani* Kuhn. has not been

reported so far and this is the first report of this fungus on *D. odonata*, the African yam causing leaf rot. A die-back complex in *D. alata* due to *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* and *R. solani* was reported in Solomon Islands by Jackson and Hook (1980).

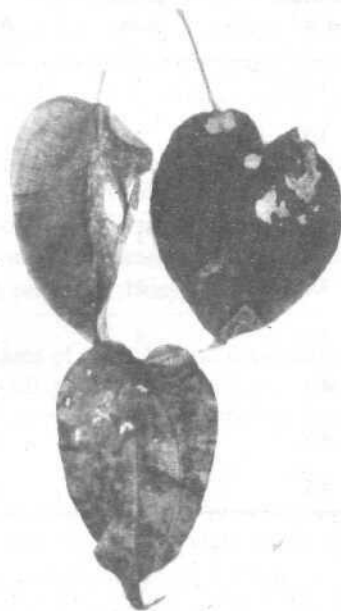


Fig 1. Infected leaves showing rotting symptom (upper) and rotting leaf with sclerotia (below)

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## REFERENCES

- Jackson, G. H. V. and Hook, F. J. N. 1980. Diseases of taro (*Colocassia esculenta*) and yams (*Dioscorea alata*). Abs. in RPP 59 : 60