

*CYLINDROCLADIUM LEAF BLIGHT OF ACACIA AURICULIFORMIS A. CUNN*

Acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis* A. Cunn.) is a fast growing hardy plant tolerant to many stress conditions. In addition to its use as a firewood plant, it can be used as a wind break. In spite of its tolerance to many stress conditions, the plant is prone to attack of pathogens. During the rainy seasons of 1994 and 1995, a severe leaf blight disease of fungal origin was noticed in plants grown as a wind break in the Cadbury KAU Cocoa-Research Project, College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara, Trichur, Kerala.

The disease initiated as water-soaked black lesion on the leaf lamina. The symptom invariably initiated on the distal end of the leaf but less commonly on the leaf margin. Occasionally it may appear in between the veins. Leaf tip infection spreads very rapidly during wet condition towards the proximal end of the leaf, finally resulting in blighting. Marginal infection develops as circular black water-soaked lesion, while that of intervenal region is linear, oblong or irregular. In severe cases, the lesions developing from the tip, margins and intervenal area coalesce resulting in the blighting of leaves. The infected regions are black during wet condition and greyish black at dry condition. Under high humid condition, whitish grey talc-like sporulation of the fungus can be seen on the lower surface of the infected leaves.

Blightened leaves defoliate during rainy period but may sometimes remain attached to the twigs.

The causal organism was isolated in potato dextrose agar medium. Inoculation on healthy leaves produced typical symptom confirming the pathogenicity of the organism. Cultural and morphological characters of the fungus were studied. On PDA it yielded luxuriant whitish mycelium later turned to reddish brown in colour. The mycelium was septate with penicillate branching of conidiophore. The primary, secondary and tertiary branches were nonseptate. Phialides and the conidia were hyaline. The spores were cylindrical, 1 to 3 septate and measured 37.6 - 68.0  $\mu\text{m}$  x 40 - 5.3  $\mu\text{m}$  in size.

Based on the morphological and cultural characters, the causal agent was identified as *Cylindrocladium ilicicola* (Hawley) Boed and Reit. The identity of the fungus was further confirmed by the courtesy of Indian Type Culture Collection, IARI, New Delhi (Ref. No. 523.94, ACC No. ITCC 4,525).

A perusal of literature revealed no report of the occurrence of *Cylindrocladium ilicicola* on *Acacia auriculiformis*. Thus, this forms the first authentic report of leaf blight of *A. auriculiformis* by *Cylindrocladium ilicicola*.

College of Horticulture  
Vellanikkara 680 654, Trichur, India

Koshy Abraham, S. Beena  
K. Anitha Cherian, Sally K. Mathew