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SAISSETIA NIGRA (NIETN) A PEST ON CASSAVA

Cassava, *Manihot esculenta* (Crantz.) is one of the major food crops of Kerala, cultivated in an area of 0.33 million hectares. Mites as direct pests and white flies as vectors of mosaic disease are causing immense damage to the crop. The scale insect, *Aonidomytilus albus* Ckll. that infests the stem also appears sporadically, especially during dry months. In Madagascar (Malagasy Republic) *Saissetia coffeae* was reported to attack the young wood of planting slips of cassava, (Dulong, 1971).

During December, 1977 severe infestation of a scale insect was noticed on 4-5 month old cassava in different parts, of Quilon District in Kerala. The black, hemispherical scales were seen covering the tender stem. The infestation resulted in sickly appearance of the plants, wilting of leaves and later leaf fall. The spread of the pest was found very rapid.

The scale insect was identified as *Saissetia nigra* (Nietn) (Hemiptera: Coccidae). No previous record on the occurrence of *S. nigra* on cassava was available.

സംഗ്രഹം

കേരളത്തിൽ കൊല്ലം ജില്ലയിൽ സൈസേഷിയ നൈന എന്ന ശല്യകീടം മരച്ചീനി യെ സാരമായി ബാധിക്കുന്നതായി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

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