

*BEMISIA TABACI* GUEN—A NEW PEST OF CINNAMON\*

*Cinnamomum verum* Presl, is one of the three important tree spices grown for its dried inner bark—the true cinnamon of commerce. The cultivation of this spice crop is confined to the lower elevation of Western Ghats in Cannanore, Calicut and Kottayam districts in Kerala and lower Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu. Singh *et al.* (1978) identified 16 major and minor insect pests causing considerable loss to the crop in India.

A nursery of *C. verum* is being maintained at the experimental farm at Peruvannamuzhi of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Regional Station, Calicut, Kerala. A high incidence of whitefly, *Bemisia tabaci* Guen, Hemiptera, Aleyrodidae was observed in the nursery during middle of March 1979. This is the first record of whitefly in Cinnamon. Nayar, Anantkrishnan and David, (1976) had reported 59 other host plants of *Bemisia tabaci*.

Out of 1089 plants examined in the nursery on the 16th March 1979, 11.7 per cent were found to be infested by this pest. Leaf damage by feeding was found to the extent of 31.2%. The average population of whitefly on that date was found to be 255.0 per leaf. This pest prefers tender leaves. Numerous brown feeding spots were found on the leaves reducing the chlorophyll content of the leaves. An increase in the population of the pest was observed (456/leaf) after a fortnight.

This is only a preliminary report and investigation is in progress to work out the biology of the insect and control measures.

The authors are thankful to Dr. M.K Nair, Joint Director, CPCRI Regional Station, Calicut for critically going through the manuscript.

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