

RESEARCH ON YELLOW LEAF DISEASE OF ARECANUT*

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Yellow leaf disease of arecanut remains today as the most serious problem facing the arecanut growers. This malady is prevalent in different intensities in several areas of Kerala and in two, and perhaps three, pockets of Karnataka State. If the reports which we are receiving from the farmers are any guide, it is probably spreading also steadily.

Organized research on this malady was begun in 1959 with the establishment of the Regional Arecanut Research Station, Palode (now known as the CPCRI Research Centre, Palode). Research on certain basic aspects was soon taken up at the Central Arecanut Research Station, Vittal (now known as CPCRI Regional Station, Vittal) and also to a lesser extent at the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Vellayani. There was then possibly a slackening in the research efforts during the late 60's and very early 70's. One reason could have been that with the high prices prevailing for arecanut, the farmers might have been managing the gardens efficiently. And this we know, helps in the remission of the disease symptoms and in increasing the productivity of the gardens even if they are affected by this malady. Then, as the prices fell in early 70's the farmers might have begun to neglect the gardens again. This could have contributed towards an increase in the expression of the symptoms. And now, with the prevailing good prices of arecanuts, the farmers, especially those in the affected areas, might be feeling the pinch of this neglect more acutely.

The CPCRI has, since the last three years, recognized this malady as the first priority problem in arecanut research. Since then, it has been organizing periodically series of meetings of some of the leading scientists of this country, and with their advice, the Institute has organized a number of research projects with definite time tables for their completion. During the last few months, it has also sought to establish cooperative research projects particularly with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and the Karnataka State Horticulture Department. The Third Combined Workshops of the All India Coordinated Coconut & Arecanut and Cashew & Spices Improvement Projects held at Coimbatore in December 1975 has also made certain recommendations for the management of this disease affected gardens. This is the result of our recognition that yields from affected gardens can be increased considerably if they are supplied with adequate dosages of manures and plant protection measures and cultural operations are properly carried out.

This special issue of *Areca nut and Spices Bulletin* reviews all the work that has been carried out on this malady so far. We hope that this will serve as a valuable guide particularly to the research personnel engaged in this problem. The CPCRI is thankful to the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development for publishing the entire work in a Special Number. The Institute also takes this opportunity to assure the affected farmers that no efforts will be spared to find a solution to this problem in the shortest possible time.

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