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BRIEF COMMUNICATION

RECORD OF THE RED SPIDER MITE *TETRANYCHUS LUDENI* ZACHER (ACARINA : TETRANYCHIDAE) ON THE COCONUT PALM[1]

B. SATHIAMMA

Central Plantaton Crops Reseasch Institute, Regional Station, Kayangulam, Krishnapuram, India 690 533

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Tetranychus ludeni was newly recorded from cocount plam foliage. The egg to adult period was completed in 8-11 days. January—February is the peak period of mite abundance in the field.

(Key words: Tetranychus ludeni, cocount)

GHAI & WADHI (1983) listed 17 species of phytophagous mites on the coconut plam *(Cocos nucifera* L.), including seven species of eriophyid, eight species of tetranychid and two species of tenuipalpid mites. SATHIAMMA (1985, 1987) added *Dolichotetranychus vandergooti* (Oudemans) (Tenuipalpidae); *Oligonychus iseilemae* (Hirst) and *Tetranychus* sp. (Tetranychidae) to this list.. The third species was subsequently identified as *T. ludeni* Zacher. This is the first record of the species on a perennial crop like the coconut palm.

Colonies of *T. ludeni* inhabit the adaxial surface of the coconut leaflets, in profuse webbing and drain the sap ultimately to cause drying of the affected parts. PRITCHARD & BAKER (1955) distinguished the species by the presence of aedeagus bearing a very small distal knob without any posterior angulation.

In the laboratory, the egg to adult stages are completed in 8–11 days with a male to female ratio of 1:3. The females are longer-lived (6–27 days) as compared to the males (3–14 days). The fecundity varies from 6–13 eggs per female during the oviposition period of 5–9 days.

The peak period of population abundance in the field was during January and February and the mite was totally absent during June and July.

T. ludeni was first recorded as a greenhouse crop pest by ZACHER (1913) in France. Subsequently, a number of authors observed its occurrence on many vegetable crops. PUTTASWAMY & CHANNABASAVANNA (1979) reported 18 host plants of this mite including 13 new records from Karnataka. SADANA (1985) listed 26 host plants of *T. ludeni* from India. KARUPAUCHAMY & MOHANASUNDARAM (1987) observed this species on five host plants in Tamil Nadu. Beans is the only recorded host plant of this mite from Kerala (SARADAMMA & NAIR, 1976).

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