

This is the first report from India of *Botrytis cinerea* causing grey mould of pea. This fungus has a wide host range and is reported to cause destructive diseases on several crops in India.³ Since Joshi and Singh¹ first reported the disease on gram in India, it has been observed in

³ BILGRAMI, K.S., JAMALUDDIN and RIZWI, M.A. 1979. *Fungi of India*. Part I. Today's and Tomorrow's Publications, New Delhi. 467 p.

S. KESHAVA BHAT and D.N. MATHEW, Department of Zoology, University of Calicut, Calicut University Post, 673 635 Kerala.

The lesser bandicoot-rat as a pest of cashew

Cashew, *Anacardium occidentale* L., is an important cash crop in great demand both in India and abroad. Many insects and mites have been reported as pests on this crop.¹ Abraham² reported damage to cashew nuts by the house rat, *Rattus rattus* in storehouses. An instance where the lesser bandicoot rats, *Bandicota bengalensis* Gray, had attacked the nuts of cashew is reported here. During a search for squirrel nests in a cashew plantation near Kasaragod, Kerala, the authors observed that *B. bengalensis* had attacked cashew nuts and hoarded them in their burrows.

A large number of ripe cashew nuts, most of which had been nibbled open and fed on by unidentified rodents, were found in the field between March and May 1980 near the base of cashew trees. One side of the nut was neatly cut and the kernel scooped out and eaten (see Fig. 1). On further observations, damaged cashew nuts were also traced from

several gram-growing areas of the country, often in the form of epiphytotics. Gram appears to be more susceptible to *B. cinerea* infection than pea; when the two crops are grown in close proximity, disease on pea is less severe than that on gram. As natural infection has been observed on pea plants, the latter may serve as a collateral host for this pathogen or as a reservoir for further infection on gram.

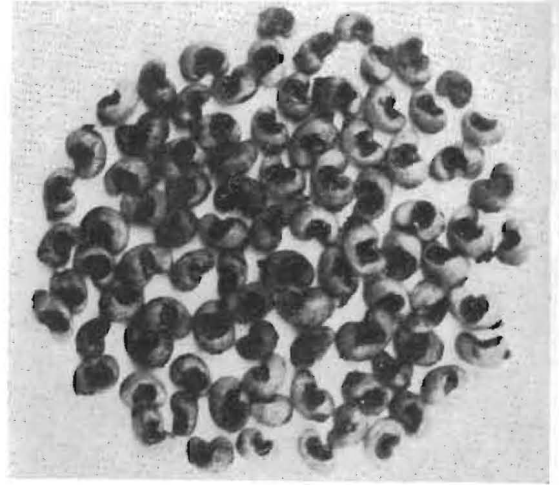


Figure 1. Cashew nuts damaged by *Bandicota bengalensis*

the entrance of rodent burrows in the plantation. The species occupying these burrows was trapped and identified as *B. bengalensis* after the keys given by Ellerman.³ Nine burrows were excavated and 28 - 141 (mean 87.1 ± 14.9) nuts, both damaged and undamaged, were collected from them. Hoarding of cashew nuts was observed in the chambers as well as in the tunnels of burrows.

There are no previous records of the lesser bandicoot as a pest of cashew nut.

¹ Nair, M.K., Rao, E.V.V.B., Nambiar, K.K.N. and Nambiar, M.C., eds 1979. *Cashew (Anacardium occidentale L.) Monograph on Plantation Crops - 1*. Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod, India. 169 p.

² Abraham, E.V. 1958. Pests of cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*). *Indian Journ. agric. Sci.*, 28: 531-543.

³ Ellerman, J.R. 1961. The fauna of India including Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. *Mammalia*, Vol. 3. Parts 1 and 2. Manager of Publications, New Delhi. 884 p.