

30.5.86

Spindle Bug of Arecanut



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SPINDLE BUG

Spindle bug, *Carvalhoia arecae Mitterchina* the brightly coloured red and black bug (6 mm) found inhabiting in leaf axils of arecanut is a chronic scourge in areca plantations of Kerala, Karnataka and in parts of Tamil Nadu. The peak period of infestation occurs from pre-monsoon showers in March—April to November—December though the pest is found throughout the year.

Symptoms:

Both the nymphs and adults hiding in the leaf axils, suck up sap from the tender leaflets of the spindle, unopened leaflets etc. Fresh feeding marks appear as watery streaks on the infested leaflet and the lesions turn brown and become necrotic resulting in the formation of numerous minute shot holes. Severely affected spindle is unable to open and often rotting of leaflets is also noticed. Affected leaves are clearly distinguished from ground by the appearance of brown, round or linear lesions among lush green leaves. Tender tissues are more susceptible to spindle bug infestation and hence the spindle is to be protected from the bug.

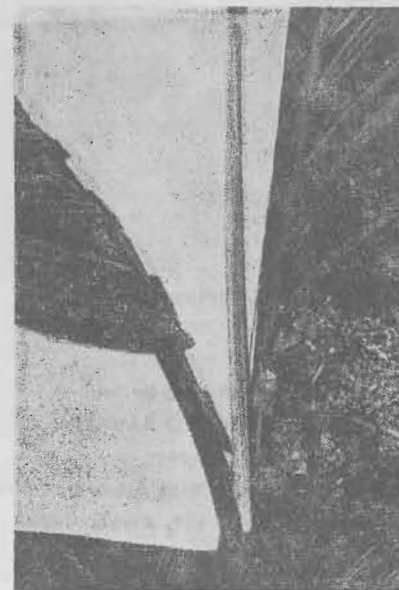
How to prevent the Spindle Bug Attack

Due to the pest abundance during rainy season and because of the vertically slanting position of the leaves, the effectiveness of insecticidal application in the form of spray or axil filling of granular insecticides are not very satisfactory. Granules may stick in the leaf axil a little longer than spray but both will be washed down. Hence the following method of application of Phorate is recommended. The deep penetrating and repelling smell released by Phorate fumes ward off the bug.

Preventive Measure:

1. Polythene packet (5 cm × 3 cm) containing 2 g Phorate (Thimet 10 G) is to be heat-sealed.
2. Two or three pin hole perforations are made on the top side of the packet.
3. One packet each is fixed on the top most two leaf axils using a pin. This should be done before the onset of monsoon.
4. The packets are transferred to the youngest leaf axil as and when new leaves emerge.

The same pair of packets can be repeatedly used upto eight months.



Placing phorate packets in the leaf axil

Merits of Phorate Packet Technique

- * Prevents leaching of pesticide during rains.
- * No phytotoxicity.
- * Ecologically sound.
- * Biologically very safe.
- * Natural enemies and pollinators not affected.
- * Spent packets can be safely disposed off.
- * Long durability.
- * Highly economical.
- * Cost of two packets less than pair 40 only for 6—8 months.

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Published by:
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