

CHILLI VIRUS DISEASES IN THE DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA

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Chilli plant is known to be susceptible to a number of viruses (Ramakrishnan 1961., Thornberry, H. H. 1966.) In studies conducted at the Agricultural Research Station, Maha Illuppallama, on samples obtained from the main chilli growing areas of Anuradhapura, Jaffna and Vavuniya Districts, the mosaic group of viruses was recovered in the majority of the ninety samples tested each season over a period of three years. The balance samples contained the leaf curl group of viruses. Mixed infections of two or more viruses were common on samples collected from plants where the first chilli pick had been taken, *i.e.* 2-2½ months from transplanting.

The components of the mosaic group of viruses have been identified as follows: (1) Chilli mosaic virus Ch. MV. (2) Cucumber mosaic virus CMV (type strain), (3) Cucumber mosaic virus CMV (atypical strain), (4) Potato virus Y. PVY, (5) Tobacco mosaic virus TMV. (6) Top Necrosis Virus TMV, (4) a ringspot type virus.

The leaf curl virus causes severe yield reductions. Its incidence was higher in the Anuradhapura and Vavuniya Districts, where it is the chief limiting factor in the production of profitable crops of chilli. In the Jaffna District the incidence of leaf curl declined over the survey period mainly on account of the increased use of chemical control measures against the insect vector *Bemisia tabaci*.

References:

1. Ramakrishnan, K. 1961 J. Indian Botanical Soc., 40, 12.
2. Thornberry, H. H. 1966. Index of Plant Virus Diseases, Agricultural Hand Book 307. U.S.D.A. Publication.