

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS ON BLOSSOM BLIGHT OF CASHEW

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Blossom blight or Inflorescence blight is one of the major problems in Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale L*) as it results in heavy losses in yields. Loss of yields upto 30% has been reported. Anon 1966). Swaine (1959) reported that blight is caused by *Helopeltis anacardii* Miller on developing tender inflorescences in Tanganyika. In Sri Lanka although *Helopeltis antonii* Sign and certain fungi are thought to be associated with the disease their exact role in caution and control has not been clearly understood. Therefore studies were undertaken at Kondachchi to fill this lacuna and work out effective plant protection schedules against this malady.

Isolations from old scabby lesions of inflorescences showed that the tea mosquito *Helopeltis antonii* was the primary causal agent and *Gloesporium mangiferae*, *Pestaliopsis* spp, *Botrydiplodia* spp were only secondary saprophytic colonizers. Further investigations with insecticidal treatments utilizing Endosulfan, Ekalux and Supersumithion clearly showed that spraying with Endosulfan at the appropriate time (emergence of flushes with maha rains) effectively control the malady. But if the pest population increases later inclusion of a fungicide (copper fungicides and wettable sulphur) is necessary. Fungicides need not be included in the initial spray as it was observed that fungi could only be isolated from old scabby lesions and not from young affected inflorescences.

References:

1. Anonymous 1966. Ibid: for the period of 1st July 1965 to 30th June 1966. pp 48
2. Swaini, G. 1965. A preliminary note on *Helopeltis* spp damaging cashew in Tanganyika territory Bull. Ento. Res. 50. pp 171-181