

SCALE INSECT INFESTATION OF SEEDLING NURSERIES OF *HEVEA*

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The rubber tree, *Hevea brasiliensis* is not generally subjected to heavy insect attacks. The latex that exudes when insects feed on healthy bark, coagulates spontaneously trapping the insects. Several species of scale insects, viz., *Saissetia* spp., *Pulvinaria* spp., and *Lepidosaphes* spp., damage rubber seedlings by feeding between the latex vessels causing death of seedlings.

SECTION B

Several estates have established large nurseries to provide plants for the accelerated smallholder re-planting programme in Kalutara, Ratnapura and Kegalle Districts. Many of these nurseries are heavily infested with scale insects.

Three insecticides THIODAN (Endosulfan) ; FOSFERNO (an Organo-phosphorus) and ROGOR 40 (an Organo-phosphorus) were screened in the field to determine their efficacy to control scale insects. In a preliminary study each insecticide was sprayed on five plots containing more than 500 affected plants in a mixed population. In experiment 2 the effect of insecticides on scale insects were tested on three rubber seedlings each having about 40 insects to determine the numbers destroyed. The most effective insecticide FOSFERNO was sprayed at five concentrations. For each treatment eight seedlings were used.

Several unidentified predators were seen on the scale insects. Further a parasitic fungus (unidentified) has been isolated.