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CONTROL OF DAMPING-OFF IN NURSERIES CAUSED BY *PYTHIUM BUTLERI*

B. Sivakadadcham

(Central Agricultural Research Institute, Gannoruwa, Peradeniya)

Pythium butleri Subramaniam causes damping-off in nurseries especially in the warm regions of the country. The fungus is readily isolated in plain water agar with Benlate (benomyl) added to the medium at 50 mg/l (PWA-benlate medium).

Pythium species cannot tolerate soil temperatures above 45°C. Soil temperatures in nursery beds were raised above this temperature using solar radiation by covering the beds with a double layer of clear polythene for two or more successive days when there was bright sunshine. Soil temperatures at 2 in. and 4 in. depths exceeded 45°C for more than one hour, the desired minimum, each day under these conditions. This treatment was very effective in controlling damping-off while germination was also quickened and the seedling produced vigorous.

Formalin treatment at 100 ml/m^2 was also found to be effective in controlling damping-off. Morut (quintozene + fenaminosulf) did not give satisfactory results.