

EFFECTS OF VIRUSES ISOLATED FROM CULTIVATED
CHILLI CROPS ON CAPSIUM CULTIVARS

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Twelve selected isolates of sap transmissible viruses from a collection including those isolated from plants affected by the chilli disorder in the dry zone and by the 'croton leaf' syndrome at Kilinochchi were studied for their effects on growth and development on MI cultivars and other varieties, grown under controlled conditions where plants were rooted in favourable soil media and not exposed to adverse environmental conditions.

The isolates did not induce serious effects on growth and productivity. Differences in plant height, internode length, leaf size, etc., between virus infected plants and the controls were not marked. Foliar symptoms of mosaic, mottling and crinkling were however observed. Nine isolates induced mild mosaic on leaves without affecting their size. Three isolates from Galnewa caused severe mottling and leaf crinkling. Pod formation was similar in all cases although more curved pods were produced in virus infected plants.

The study indicates that the MI cultivars, widely cultivated, have adequate tolerance to the viruses common in chilli. However, some sensitive Capsicum cultivars such as 'Sudu Kochchi' reacted to these viruses with the development of severe symptoms, especially on leaves such as leaf distortion and leaf narrowing.