EVALUATION OF CUT COCONUT PETIOLES AND SUGARCANE STEM CUTTINGS FOR MASS REARING OF *RHYNCHOPHORUS FERRUGINEUS*, THE RED PALM WEEVIL

C. Rajapakse and P. Kanagaratnam
Coconut Research Institute, Lunuwila.

The red palm weevil is a serious pest of coconut in Sri Lanka. Laboratory culture of this weevil is usually maintained on cut coconut petioles. However it is difficult to obtain large quantities of coconut petioles continuously for mass rearing. Red weevil could be kept alive by feeding with sugarcane in the laboratory. Therefore this study was undertaken to compare the suitability of cut coconut petioles and sugarcane stem cuttings as material for rearing the red weevils.

A pair of newly emerged male and female adult weevils were caged separately with each rearing medium and there were twenty replicates in each. Then the number of eggs laid, hatchability and longevity of weevils were recorded.

There was a significant difference between the two treatments on the average no. of eggs laid ($P=0.001$). The average number of the eggs per female reared on sugarcane and on the coconut petioles were 251.6 and 152.7 respectively. The ovipositing period of the females reared on sugarcane was longer, than the females, reared on coconut petioles. Life span of the weevils was also significantly longer in the adult reared on sugarcane ($P=0.05$). Therefore, sugarcane stem pieces proved better than the cut coconut petioles for laboratory rearing of adult red weevil.