

PEST INCIDENCES ON GHERKIN; CUCUMIS SATIVUS L.  
IN MAHAWELI SYSTEM B AREA.

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The pest incidences were studied on gherkin (Variety, Calipso) in a continuous cultivation under insecticide free conditions and in farmer fields from 1989 to 1991. The crop has a multiple pest complex. The important species include rodents, insects and mites. The most important rodent pest is mole rat, Bandicota benghalensis (Rodentia: Muridae). Thrips sp. (Thripidae), Aphis sp. (Aphididae) leaf eating caterpillars such as Diaphania indica Saund. (Pyralidae), Spodoptera litura F. (Noctuidae), Chrysodeixis sp. (Noctuidae) and Euproctis spp. (Lymantriidae), Aulacophora africana and Rapidopalpa spp. (Chrysomelidae), Apomecyna sp. (Cerambycidae), Epilachna spp. (Coccinellidae), Ferrisia sp. (Pseudococcidae), Aspongopus sp. (Pentatomidae), Leptoglossus australis F. (Coreidae), ants: Solenopsis geminata F. (Formicidae), Diabrotica undecimpunctata Mann. (Crysomelidae), Leptoglossus sp. (Coreidae) and Bemisia spp. (Aleyrodidae), are the major insect pests while Tetranychus spp. (Tetranychidae) are the most important mites. Rodents mostly damage seeds before germination. Thrips sp., Aphis spp., leaf eating caterpillars, adults of Rapidopalpa spp., Epilachna sp., Ferrisia sp., Tetranychus spp., Aspongopus sp. and Bemisia sp. infest the leaves and tender shoots. The larvae of Rapidopalpa spp. damage the root system and underground stem while that of Apomecyna sp. bore the vines. Solenopsis geminata damage the vines by girdling and making nests at the plant base.