

**D-26: SOME STUDIES ON *Fusarium equiseti*, THE CAUSAL ORGANISM
OF DAMPING OFF OF *Casuarina equisetifolia* SEEDLINGS**

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Post-emergence damping off disease of *Casuarina equisetifolia* seedlings caused by *Fusarium equiseti* is a problem in forest nurseries in Sri Lanka. In this study the growth and sporulation characters of *F. equiseti* were investigated. The fungus was isolated from naturally infected seedlings from a forest nursery.

Among the growth media tested the maximum growth was on Potato Dextrose Agar (PDA). Optimum temperature for the colony growth and sporulation was at 25 °C. The best growth was observed at pH 6.0 on PDA, which is similar to the pH of the nursery bed. The highest conidia germination was at 25 °C. Varied concentrations of conidial suspensions were introduced into pots which contained sterile soil where seeds were sown. Ten days after emergence of seedlings the percentage of mortality was higher at the concentration of 4×10^3 spores ml⁻¹. The results show the optimum conditions for the growth of *F. equiseti* under laboratory conditions.