

**B-85: *Asperisporium* black spot in *Carica papaya*, a new record**

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The development of black spot, blight or 'rust' in the leaf and fruits of papaya due to *Asperisporium caricae* infection has been reported in Florida, South America, South Africa and Tanzania. No reports could be traced on its occurrence in Asia. In early 1992, unusual, black spotting in the mature leaves of a papaya cultivar grown in Kandy area (elevation 2,500 ft) was observed and the examination of diseased leaves revealed the main causal organism as *Asperisporium caricae*. Pathogenicity was subsequently proved by carrying out Koch's postulates. There were 2 other fungi also associated with the disease, *Sclerospora* sp. and *Verticillium* sp. The disease was also found in young and mature papaya fruits. Young fruits when infected turned yellow and dropped prematurely.

In a tree only the leaves below 10th or 12th were infected and the severity of disease increased progressively downwards. The 3 fungi colonised only the lower surface of the leaf and some discoloration was noticeable in the upper surface of the spots. *Sclerospora* and *Verticillium* could be seen only during certain months of the year. Exact role of these 2 fungi in the disease is not clear, however, the available evidence suggested the existence of some form of mycoparasitism.

The disease was severe during rainy periods and prolonged droughts enabled the plants to completely recover from disease. The 3 fungi, however, could survive on older, hanging leaves and commence fresh infection with the beginning of rain.