

D-10 Prevalence and distribution of entomopathogenic nematodes in Dondra coastal belt of Sri Lanka

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Soil samples from 4 sites comprising 16 subsites representing ecologically diverse habitats along the Dondra coastal belt of Sri Lanka were examined to study the prevalence and distribution of entomopathogenic nematodes (EPN) belonging to the Families of Heterorhabditidae and Steinernematidae which have a great potential in controlling number of economically important insect pests, using the *Galleria* baiting technique.

The 4 subsites sampled at 30m from the tidal zone (0m) to the interior were positive for EPN and both *Steinernema* spp. Travassos and *Heterorhabditis* spp. Poinar isolates which are new species to the existing pool of EPN were found. These soils were silt loam soils inhabiting vegetation such as *Ipomea*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Pandanus*, *Calotropis* and common grass. However, no insect species were recovered at the time of sampling.

The results of this study showed that these nematodes could survive in moderately alkaline soils (pH 7.6-8.5) and could tolerate 30°C temperature.

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