

## Two diseases affecting black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.) in nurseries in the Kurunegala District and their control

During the Maha season of 2001 most of the black pepper nurseries in the Kurunegala District were affected by two diseases caused by bacterial pathogens. A Gram negative, rod shaped, motile bacterium was isolated from one disease and tentatively identified as a species of *Xanthomonas*. It had a slimy yellowish appearance when grown on nutrient agar medium. Symptoms included rotten watery patches with yellow progressive margins on infected leaves. And accumulation of water was observed on the underside of the lesion, which was visible only early in the morning. This infection was controlled by (i) application of 1% Bordeaux mixture after removing rooted cuttings from humid chambers and (ii) following sanitary practices. Also a new bacterial disease probably caused by *Pseudomonas* sp. was observed in a nursery in the town area in the Kurunegala District. Symptoms consisted of swollen circular watery patches on leaves resembling a local infection. Disease progressive margins were observed in most of the lesions. Isolation on nutrient agar medium showed a whitish, Gram negative, rod shaped motile bacterium, which gave negative response to the potato rot test and was tentatively identified as a species of *Pseudomonas*. For further identification, the two bacteria isolated will be sent to relevant taxonomists. Experiments conducted to test the potting mixture of rooted cuttings and soil from nursery beds against the bacterium isolated showed the presence of the *Pseudomonas* sp. and were in very high concentrations.