NEW RECORDS

A new flowering scape rust disease of *Schoenoplectus littoralis* caused by *Puccinia scirpi* DC.

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*Schoenoplectus littoralis* (Schrad.) Palla (Family-Cyperaceae) plants commonly grown in marshy habitats are used for making mats and sometimes for tying purposes. During the month of June, 2005 rust infection was observed on the flowering scapes (clums) of *S. littoralis* at Ramnagar, District Panna, Madhya Pradesh. The prevailing temperature was 48±2°C. Careful observations revealed that scapes were heavily infected with rust fungus. Numerous circular to elliptical, irregular to scattered or in cluster, yellowish brown coloured, eruptant uredopustules of 0.5-3.0 mm were noticed, which later on turned darkish brown to black at maturity. Microscopic observations of these pustules exhibited golden brown coloured globose to sub globose, single celled, echinulate uredospores. Teleutospores were not observed.

The pathogen was identified as *Puccinia scirpi* DC. (ITCC, New Delhi, No. 6137.05, HCIO 46259). Duplicate specimen is deposited in the Museum, Department of Botany, A.M.U., Aligarh. Scanning of literature revealed that this pathogen has not been reported so far on *S. littoralis* from India. Hence it constitutes the first report of flowering scape rust disease on *S. littoralis* caused by *P. scirpi*.

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Identification of Banded sclerotial disease of sugarcane in India

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Banded sclerotial disease incited by *Thanatephorus sasakii* (Shirai) C.C. Tu and Kimborough (basidiomycetes) was observed on sugarcane cultivars 85A261, 90A272 during field visits in Regional Agricultural Research Station, Anakapalle December 2004. The disease was characterized by a series of irregularly shaped patches across the leaf blades which are confined to the older leaves. These bands are initially dirty green, turn brownish and finally straw-coloured with a well-defined reddish-brown borders. Similar symptoms were also observed on the leaf sheaths. Pale brown, beige coloured fungal mycelium on the surface of the leaf and small spherical irregularly shaped sclerotia, 3-6 mm in diameter, turning to back to dark brown on maturity are frequently observed on the surface of diseased areas. The fungus was diagnosed by the production of black sclerotia on the potato dextrose agar (PDA) media. The culture is deposited in ITCC, IARI with accession No. 6141. The perusal of literature indicated that so far this disease has not been recorded in India.

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