NEW RECORDS

Stem rot of *Salvia coccinea* caused by *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* - A new host record

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Salvia (*Salvia coccinea* L.) is an annual ornamental flower crop. It provides spectacular display of colour and add immensely to the decorative value of a garden within a short span of time. A severe stem rot was noticed during February-March 1999 in koogalthorai area of the Nilgiris district. Appearance of water-soaked areas on the main stem at a distance from the ground level, covering of stem by a white creeping strands of the fungus mycelium, formation of black sclerotia and ultimately rotting of the stem were the most typical symptoms (Fig. 1). The portion above the affected part break away. The rot causes the tissues to become soft and they easily peel off into shreds. Newly formed leaves wither. The pathogen was isolated from diseased tissues and cultured on potato dextrose agar was identified as *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* (Lib.) de Bary. On potato dextrose agar slants the fungus produced black sclerotia. The pathogenicity of the causal organism was established. The literature reveals that this fungus has not been reported on *Salvia coccinea* from India or abroad, hence constitutes a new host record.

Two new diseases of Lai pata (*Brassica juncea var. rugosa*)

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Lai pata (*Brassica juncea var. rugosa*) was found to suffer from severe leaf blight and spot diseases during November, 1998 at the research farm, College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University, Imphal. The leaf blight was characterised by the appearance of large necrotic lesions on the midrib of lowermost leaf lamina which withered and dried up. The fungus was isolated on potato dextrose agar (PDA). Pathogenicity of the fungus was tested by inoculating midrib of old leaves by placing 5 mm fungal disc each. The fungus which was isolated from tissue collected from diseased samples found in nature and artificially induced ones yielded consistently *Rhizoctonia solani* Kuhn.

The leaf spot disease was characterised by the appearance of individual brown circular lesions with concentric rings or in groups on the old leaves. As the disease progressed, the lesions usually coalesced with each other damaging large areas of the leaf lamina. The fungus was isolated on potato dextrose agar (PDA). The pathogenicity was tested by spraying fungal fragments and conidia on the leaves and covering the sprayed leaves with polyethylene bags for 30 h. The fungus isolated from diseased tissue obtained from nature and artificially induced disease yielded consistently *Alternaria brassicae*.

This seems to be the first report of leaf blight and leaf spot diseases of *Lai pata* caused by *R. solani* and *A. brassicae*.

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A new leaf spot disease of wheat from India

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Large water soaked lesions, usually in the middle of the wheat leaf lamina were observed which became ash grey later, measuring 0.5 to 3.0 mm or getting extended as the disease progressed. The disease with moderate severity was observed on the upper leaves of wheat crop in the farmers' field around Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Ropar, Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Doraha and Khanna from first the fortnight of February in 1996, on bread wheat and durum varieites : HO 2329, WH 542, PBW 34, PDW 215. Symptoms were also observed on the experimental materials at Regional Research Centre at Gurdaspur and at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The appearance of lesions was preceded by a spell of from in the last week of January up to the end of first week of February. Since than, the disease has been observed in traces only from these areas particular on durum varieties.

Dirty white sporodochia, arranged in a row, with radiating white mycelium were observed in the lesions in which 3 celled macroconidia, measuring 20.24 - 44.1 μ were produced. The spots on Raj 3850, a test entry at Ludhiana and a field collection from Pathankot showed the presence of submerged pin head like per-}

ithecia, which contained immature asci when the materials were incubated at 20°C in moist chambers.

On the basis of symptoms, arrangement of sporodochia, size and shape of macroconidia, the pathogen was identified as *Fusarium nivale* (Fr.) Cess, with *Calonectria graminicola* type of perfect stage. The pathogen could be cultured on Potato-Dextrose - Agar and produced dull, greyish, pale yellow growth and microconidia only. The cultured fungus was inoculated on wheat variety HD 2329 and durum varieties PDW 233, PDW 215 and PBW 34 and produced the lesions characteristic of disease. The material was deposited in HC10, No. 43062.

The pathogen has been reported to cause lesions on wheat leaves as result of unusual climate. This is a first record of the disease on wheat from India, and pathogen is listed under quarantine; although the fungus has been recorded from India from soil, groundnut rhizosphere, roots in Grasslands and dicots like *Ipomea carnea* and *Trimmella rhomboidea* from UP, Orrisa and Coimbatore.

*Fusarium nivale* causes pink snow mold disease of wheat resulting in stand-loss due to seed rot as well as seedling infection, foot-rot in the similar conditions. In sub-tropical Andean region of Latin America, higher valleys of East Africa and higher plateau of Mexico, it causes leaf blight (leaf blotch or ash spot) on wheat, Triticale, rye and more severely on durums. Different parts of Punjab are now new niches for this disease.

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