

DISEASE NOTE

PASSIFLORA CHLOROTIC SPOT A DISEASE CAUSED BY A STRAIN OF *BEAN YELLOW MOSAIC VIRUS* IN *PASSIFLORA COERULEA* IN ITALY

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In spring 2000, chlorotic spots and light mottling were observed in the leaves of a blue passionflower plant (*Passiflora caerulea*, family *Passifloraceae*), growing in a private garden of Napoli (southern Italy). Electron microscope observations of leaf dips from naturally infected plant showed a virus with filamentous particles ca 750 nm in length. This virus was readily transmitted by inoculation of sap to a range of herbaceous hosts and to healthy seedlings of *Passiflora caerulea*, reproducing the field syndrome. The virus was identified as an isolate of *Bean yellow mosaic virus* (BYMV) by biological and serological tests. The experimental host range was comparable to that described for BYMV (Bos, 1970) while, in agar gel SDS-immunodiffusion tests, crude sap from naturally infected plant formed clear precipitin lines with an antiserum to BYMV (kindly supplied by V. Lisa, IVV-CNR, Turin). The same antiserum clearly decorated virus particles from leaf dips. BYMV has been previously reported from *Passiflora caerulea*, in mixed infection with *Cucumber mosaic virus* (CMV), in Croatia (Plese and Wrischer, 1984). This is the first record of BYMV infection in *Passiflora caerulea* in Italy.

Bos L., 1970. Bean yellow mosaic virus. CMI/AAB Description of Plant Viruses, no. 40.

Plese N., Wrischer M., 1984. A mixed infection of *Passiflora caerulea* L. with two viruses. *Acta Botanica Croatica* 43: 1-6.

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RECORDS OF POTATO VIRUSES IN LEBANON

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During a survey conducted in 2001 to assess the occurrence and distribution of potato viruses in the main production areas of Lebanon, 200 samples were collected from commercial (14) and experimental fields (30 samples) in the Bekaa Valley. All samples were tested by DAS-ELISA for the presence of *Potato virus Y* (PVY), *Potato virus A* (PVA), *Potato virus X* (PVX) and *Potato leaf roll virus* (PLRV). About half (44%) of the samples were infected by at least one virus, the prevailing being PVY (77.2% of positive samples), followed by PVX (13.8%), PVA (8.9%) and PLRV (4.9%). Mixed infections were detected in about 5% of the samples. Necrotic symptoms on tubers of cvs 'Burren' and 'Xantia' were observed for the first time in the valley, suggesting the presence of potato tuber necrotic ringspot disease (PTNRD), caused by PVY^{NTN} isolates. Immunocapture-RT-PCR from these tubers, using PVY^{NTN} specific primers (Weidemann and Maiss, 1996), gave an amplified product of the right size (835 bp) for all samples tested. PTNRD seems to be expanding in the Bekaa Valley, threatening potato production.

Weidemann H.L., Maiss E., 1996. Detection of the potato tuber necrotic ringspot strain of potato virus Y (PVY^{NTN}) by reverse transcription and immunocapture polymerase chain reaction. *Zeitschrift für Pflanzenkrankheiten und Pflanzenschutz* 103: 337-345.

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FIRST REPORT OF *MONOSPORASCUS CANNONBALLUS* ON MELON IN ITALY

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During summer 2001, several melon (*Cucumis melo* L.) plants showing collapse of the vines two weeks before harvest were observed in ten commercial fields in Latium (central Italy) and thirteen in Apulia (southern Italy). Necrosis and brownish lesions on the taproot and secondary roots, and loss of secondary and tertiary feeder roots, often associated with root rot, were the main symptoms observed. Isolations from symptomatic roots on PDA consistently yielded colonies with hyaline mycelium which after 20 days of incubation at 23°C under n.u.v. light formed perithecia, each containing several asci with one spherical black ascospore. The fungus was identified by ascospore morphology as *Monosporascus cannonballus* Pollack and Uecker. Pathogenicity of two isolates was confirmed in the greenhouse by inoculating 15 day-old seedlings of melon cv. 'Hale's Best Jumbo' with a homogenate of the fungus grown on PDA. *M. cannonballus* has been reported on watermelon in Northern Italy (Gennari *et al.*, 1999); this is the first report of the fungus on melon in Italy and of its widespread presence in many Italian melon growing areas.

Gennari S., Mirotti A., Sportelli M., 1999. Reperimento di *Monosporascus cannonballus* da piante di cocomero. *Informatore Fitopatologico* 49(1-2): 38-40.

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OUTBREAK OF BROWN SPOT OF WHITE LUPIN CAUSED BY *PLEIOCHAETA SETOSA* IN CENTRAL ITALY

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In early September 2001, an outbreak of a leaf spot disease of white lupin (*Lupinus albus* L.) was observed in field crops in Tuscany (central Italy). The spots were roughly circular and dark brown; severely infected leaves died and dropped off. Heavily infected plants showed growth reduction and some died at an early stage. Isolations from symptomatic leaf tissues consistently yielded a fungus that produced brown multiseptate conidia with apical cells bearing filiform simple or branched appendages. Colonies were olive brown or black with immersed mycelium and abundant chlamydospores; the fungus was identified as *Pleiochaeta setosa* (Kirchn.) Hughes. Three single-conidial isolates of the pathogen were used to satisfy Koch's postulates. Plants (45 days old) of white lupin, cv. 'Multitalia', were sprayed with a conidial suspension (10⁴ conidia ml⁻¹), maintained in polyethylene bags for 48 h, and then grown in a greenhouse at 25 ± 2°C. Typical symptoms appeared 4 to 7 days after inoculation, and the pathogen was re-isolated from infected tissues. This is the first report of *P. setosa* on *L. albus* in Italy. Because *P. setosa* is seedborne and soilborne (Wood and McLean, 1982), a survey should be made on the occurrence of brown spot in lupin crops.

Wood P.M., McLean G.D., 1982. Lupins – the disease problem. *Journal of Agriculture of Western Australia* 3: 86-88.

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