

Field day on Rugose Spiralling Whitefly Management in Coconut

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Rugose Spiralling Whitefly, *Aleurodicus rugioperculatus* Martin, an invasive pest to the Oriental region, was first noticed on coconut at Pollachi, Tamil Nadu in India during August 2016. Subsequently, it was reported in several districts in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Assam on banana, sapota, mango, cashew, oil palm, maize, guava, custard apple, water apple and many more ornamental plants. To sensitize the farmers and other stakeholders with respect to pest, host plants range, distribution, mode of dispersal, symptoms of damage, potential natural enemies and their management, ICAR-NBAIR, Bengaluru organized a “**Field day on Rugose Spiralling Whitefly Management in Coconut**” at Arasampatti, Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu on 30th October, 2018 in collaboration with ICAR- Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Elumichangiri, Krishnagiri & Department of Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu. This workshop was intended to take stock of the pest status of RSW through the augmentative and conservation of potential biocontrol agents. The meeting also included a field visit to study the extent of damage caused by the pest, technical lecture, and release the potential parasitoid, *Encarsia guadeloupae*.



Fig.1. Inauguration of field day at Arasampatti Village, Krishnagiri district

Field day was inaugurated by Dr.N. Bakthavatsalam, Principal Scientist & Head, Germplasm Conservation and Utilization, ICAR-NBAIR, Bengaluru in presence of special guest Dr. Mohan Raj, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Krishnagiri district, Dr. T. Sundarraj, Professor and Head, KVK, Krishnagiri (Fig.1). In the meeting, Dr. T. Venkatesan, Principal Scientist (Ent.), Dr. K. Subaharan, Principal Scientist (Ent.) from ICAR-NBAIR, Dr. M. Jalaluddin, Professor (Ent.) from Regional Research Station of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University,

Paiyur and Mr. R. Paramasivam, Field officer from Coconut Development Board, Regional Office, Chennai and about 100 progressive farmers from Krishnagiri district participated



(Fig 2).

Fig. 2. Dr. Mohanraj, DDA and Mr. R. Paramasivan, Field officer explaining about field day to farmers

Dr.T. Sunadarraj welcomed the dignitaries, experts & progressive farmers and briefed about the importance of the workshop. Dr.Mohanraj, DDA appreciated various initiatives taken by ICAR-NBAIR to contain this pest on coconut in the district and extended all possible support for the same. Dr. N. Bakthavatsalam gave an overview about the importance of this awareness programme on invasive rugose spiralling whitefly and emphasized suppression of rugose spiralling whitefly using the parasitoid *Encarsia guadeloupae* on coconut. He also appreciated the KVK, Krishnagiri and Department of Agriculture for their efforts in containing the pest in collaboration with ICAR-NBAIR.

Dr.K. Selvaraj briefed about the pest, symptoms of damage, host ranges, natural enemies (NEs) and strategies for augmentation and conservation of the potential natural enemies (Fig. 3). An extension folder (In Tamil) on the “**Management of invasive rugose spiralling whitefly in coconut**” was released by the dignitaries during the occasion. Further, nucleus culture of *E. guadeloupae* was supplied to all the farmers by the dignitaries (Fig.3). The meeting came to an end with a vote of thanks by Dr. T. Venkatesan. During the field visit, identification of pest & its parasitoid, *E. guadeloupae* and release techniques of the parasitoid were demonstrated to the farmers (Fig. 3). Farmers in principle agreed that they will not resort to chemical pesticides against RSW and would conserve the parasitoids against RSW. Besides RSW, farmers were also briefed about “**Biological control of black headed caterpillar**” by Dr. T. Venkatesan, Pr. Scientist (Entomology), ICAR-NBAIR and “**Eco-friendly management of rhinoceros beetle and red palm weevil**” by Dr. K. Subaharan, Pr.

Scientist (Entomology), ICAR-NBAIR. Finally, demonstration on parasitoid release and yellow sticky trap for RSW & installation of pheromone traps for red palm weevil and rhinoceros beetle was carried out at farmer field. This programme was widely covered by press and media (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. Technical lecture on management of RSW and distribution of parasitoid to farmers



Fig. 4. Eco-friendly management of coconut palm pest by Dr. K. Subaharan, Pr. Scientist, ICAR-NBAIR