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To
The Editor,

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Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

An alert for fruit growers

Of late there has been increasing episodes of decline of fruit orchards in TN, the cause being fungal wilt, but often predisposed by root knot nematodes. The incidence occurs at nursery stage, where the planting materials such as ground layers, rooted cuttings and grafts are themselves infested with root knot nematodes. The symptoms are sometimes seen as marginal necrosis in leaves and small knots / galls (roundish swellings) on roots.

Such infested materials once planted in fields will start deteriorating after one to two years by which time it will be too late to retrieve the plants. Nematodes pave way for entry of fungi through the wounds caused by their feeding, which further aggravates the situation by way of causing wilt disease in fruit orchards.

“Prevention is better than cure”. Farmers are requested to randomly check the polybags by removing the soil medium and observing roots for any knots or swellings, before they make bulk purchases from nurseries. This will avoid entry of nematodes into orchards through the plant materials, which once establish themselves, become difficult to control.

Public Relations Officer