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To
The Editor,
Sir,

Date: 23.02.2024

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

TNAU organized programme on “Diagnosis, Identification and Management of Mite Pests under Tribal Sub Plan”

One day training programme on Diagnosis, Identification and Management of Mite Pests under Tribal Sub Plan was jointly organized by Department of Agricultural Entomology, Centre for Plant Protection Studies, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore and Indian Council for Agricultural Research - All India Network Project on Agricultural Acarology, Bengaluru at Kollimalai tribal village in Coonoor block at Nilgiris District to the tribal farmers on 21.02.2024.

Dr.E.Sumathi, Professor (Agrl.Entomology) welcomed the gathering, narrated about the importance of tribal Sub Plan programme and delivered a lecture on role of mite pests in crop plants, their diversity and diagnosis. Released pamphlet on management of mites infesting vegetable crops and also distributed critical inputs to the tribal farmers. Dr.V.Baskaran, Assistant Professor (Agrl.Entomology) delivered a lecture on Integrated management of mite pests and proposed vote of thanks. Besides, demonstrations on identification of mite pests, assessment of mite population and damage in crop plants were made. Dr.S.Kowsika, Senior Research Fellow, Dr.S.Kanmani, Junior Research Fellow and Mr.U.Uthirakumar, Technical Assistant working in the project assisted in the conduct of this programme. Twenty five tribal farmers attended the training programme and benefitted.

The scientists explained that the mites are smaller in size ranging from 100 to 250 microns. The important phytophagous mite families include Tetranychidae (spider mites), Tenuipalpidae (false spider mites), Tarsonemidae (yellow mites) and Eriophyidae (gall/rust mites). They infest various vegetable, fruit and medicinal plants grown in the tribal villages. The nymphs and adults attack the under surface of the leaves and cause chlorotic symptom on the upper surface of leaves. Later, due to heavy infestation, they cause profuse webbing and move to the upper surface of the leaves.

In severe case of infestation, the flowers get withered and the fruits become small sized and malformed. In chilli and capsicum, mites infest apical tender leaves causing elongation of petiole and downward curling of leaves. Mite infestations during flowering stage cause withering and dropping of flowers. The affected fruits are small in size. The management strategies recommended are removal and destruction of damaged leaves and plant parts to minimize the mite attack, avoid monocropping, intercropping with non-host crops. Predatory mites, coccinellids and entomopathogenic fungi viz., *Beauveria* and *Metarhizium* can be used to control the spider mites. Conservation of natural enemies play a vital role in the management of phytophagous mites in the field. The acaricides viz., azhadirachtin 1 EC 3ml/lit. or spiromesifen 240 SC 0.8ml/lit. or fenazaquin 10 EC 2ml/ lit. or propargite 57 EC 2ml/lit or fenpyroximate 5 EC 1.2ml/lit. can be sprayed twice at 14 days interval for the management of mite pests.

Public Relations Officer