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Date: 18-3-2017

The Editor,

Sir,

То

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

Nematode Egg Parasitic Fungus, Engyodontium Aranearum

Engyodontium aranearum is a nematode egg parasitic fungus. Nematode destroying fungi are common and abundant in various soils and they play a major role in maintaining the balance of microbial life. E. aranearum have been associated with soils which suppress the multiplication of swollen nematodes. The eggs of Heterodera, Rotylenchulus, Tylenchulus, Globodera and Meloidogyne are vulnerable to attack by this fungus either within the roots or on the root surface or in the soil. Once in contact with cysts and egg masses, this fungus grow rapidly and eventually parasitize all eggs in early embryonic developmental stages. They play a major role in the regulation of population of nematodes.

The fungus E. aranearum parasitizing potato cyst nematodes is reported for the first time from The Nilgiris which is a new record from India and in Tamil Nadu.

The infection process begins with growth of the fungal hyphae in the gelatinous matrix; eventually the eggs of Meloidogyne incognita, G. rostochiensis and G. pallida are engulfed by the mycelial network. The proliferated hyphal branches penetrate the eggs. In cysts of Globodera species, the fungus penetrates the vulva or the broken and exposed neck region.

E. aranearum was formulated as talc, alginate pellet and liquid formulation. The talc, alginate pellet and liquid formulations were found to have a shelf life of three months at room temperature ($28\pm2^{\circ}$ C). The optimum dose for E. aranearum was 8 kg of

alginate pellet/ha, 4 lit of liquid/ha and 10 kg of talc/ha under field conditions against cyst nematodes of potato. For vegetables crops and other root knot, citrus, reniform and cyst nematode susceptible crops, the fungal formulation should be applied at the rate of 2.5 kg/ha.

The egg parasitic fungus, E. aranearum was found compatible with other biocontrol agents namely Pseudomonas fluorescens, Bacillus subtilis, Purpureocillium lilacinum (Paecilomyces lilacinus) and Trichoderma viride. So we can apply E. aranearum with other biocontrol agents in the field.

It is always advisable to grow continuously the nematode susceptible crops in order to increase the population of nematodes. As they are obligate parasite. This will allow the nematode antagonistic organisms in soils. Nematode antagonistic crops such as Marigold, Cowpea, Crotalaria spp. were grown under the situation of inter crop, pure crop and crop rotation with less susceptible crops, it will reduce the nematode population.

Public Relations Officer