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Coconut Research Institute



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TERMITES

Termites are commonly known as "white ants." They are classified into groups or species. Among them some are a pest on coconut seedlings and seednuts.

Occurrence

Termites that cause damage to coconut seedlings are found in all coconut growing areas. However, they occur heavily only in some localities. These termites are soil inhabiting and may be found, in greater abundance, where the soil is of a clayey type.

Detection and nature of damage

Seednuts planted in nurseries, when attacked by termites, show damage on the husk. Seedlings betray signs of attack when the central shoot withers or dries up. When the shoot (bud leaf) is completely dry, the plant can be uprooted and examined. If the seednut and the 'stem' are split open, it would be seen, that termites have caused a decay of the contents of the seednut and also open wounds on the 'stem'. Where the termites have entered, there may be incrustations of sand which is a distinguishable feature of their damage.

Control Measures**(1) Termite mounds (Ant hills)**

Termite mounds should be levelled to the ground.

There is a belief that if the queen is captured, the colony is destroyed. This is incorrect because the colony is capable of developing another queen in the event of the loss of the existing one.

(2) Protection of transplanted seedlings.

Any one of the insecticides listed below can be used. (Not arranged in a preferential order).

Insecticide	Formulation marketed	Dilution	Dosage per seedling	Place obtainable
Aldrin	Aldrex 2	2 table spoonsful in 5 gals. water	1 gal. of dilution per seedling	Lankem Ceylon Ltd., Ceylinco House, Col.,
	Aldrin, miscible oil	1 table spoonful in 6 gals. water	1 gal of dilution per seedling	Baur & Co. Ltd., P.O. Box. 11, Colombo.
Chlordane	Chlordox	1 tablespoon full in 6 gals water	1 gal. of dilution per seedling	Fison Ceylon Ltd., P.O. Box 69. Colombo.
	Intox 8	1 tablespoon ful in 6 gals. water	1 gal. of dilution per seedling	Baur & Co. Ltd., P.O. Box 11, Colombo.

The dilution is poured into the soil with a watering can. More than one application is necessary if the termite infestation is heavy. The above list is only a guide: any Aldrin or Chlordane insecticide could be used.

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