



Invasive Whitefly Pests of Coconut in India and Their Management

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ABSTRACT

Whiteflies are one of the important pest group that occurs in almost all kind of crops they inflict direct damage by sucking of plant sap by both nymphal and adult stages and also by acting as vector for many viral diseases. They also indirectly inflict damage by secreting honeydew that attracts sooty mould fungus and thereby affecting the photosynthetic process of the plant. In a past few years three major whitefly species have entered India and has created menace in coconut plantations all over the country and also some other fruit crops. The pest raised some biosecurity concerns and CPCRI, Kasargod and NBAIR, Bengaluru has declared pest alert against these whiteflies. In order to understand more about the biology, variation among the species, damaging symptoms and their management this review article has been written.

Keywords: Invasive pests, whitefly, coconut, Rugose spiralling whitefly, Nesting whitefly

Coconut palm; *Cocos nucifera* (L.) (Arecaceae) is one of the important plantation crop in India. According to FAO, India is one of the world's leading producer of coconut with annual production of 14,682,000 tonnes in 2019 (FAOSTAT, 2020). Like any other cultivated crops coconut palms are also susceptible to diverse kind of pests and diseases. But in the past three years the pest scenario in coconut plantations has varied significantly. Overall three exotic whitefly species (Rugose spiralling whitefly: *Aleurodicus rugioperculatus* Martin; followed by Bondar's Nesting Whitefly (BNW): *Paraleyrodes bondari* Peracchi and Neotropical nesting whitefly *Paraleyrodes minei* Iaccarino has appeared in our country in last 3 years forcing many scientists to flag increased biosecurity risks coming from the unrestrained transport and trade of coconut planting materials. In this chapter we discourse these invasive whitefly species i.e.,

their biology, damaging symptoms and management strategies recommended against them.

1. Rugose spiralling whitefly: *Aleurodicus rugioperculatus* Martin (Hemiptera: Aleyrodidae)

Rugose spiralling whitefly was first reported in India by (Selvaraj *et al.* 2016) from various districts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. This invasive pests known to have a wide variety of host range comprising plantation crops, ornamentals and also fruit crops. But banana and coconut are more frequented by the pest. It was first identified and reported in India in July, 2016

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