



International Association for the
PLANT PROTECTION SCIENCES

NEWSLETTER

Number X

October, 2020

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH- ACTIVITIES IN GERMANY

The United Nations General Assembly wanted to raise awareness of the global significance of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms of plants. It has therefore proclaimed 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH 2020). In numerous activities around the world the public and politicians are informed about the ecological and economic impact of new pests and diseases and how these can be prevented from invasion and can be combated.

On the occasion of the IYPH 2020, in Germany the Julius Kühn-Institut is informing the general public, politicians and experts about the danger and risks of invading plant pests and diseases. Various information materials have been prepared for this purpose. These are for example

- Giveaways like passport covers, luggage tags and shopping bags
- Various information cards
- A film about the risks of the online purchase of plants
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=rqmF-BMoKcC&feature=emb_logo)
- Leaflets for travellers, for Internet trade and on current quarantine pests

The subject of plant health has been or will be presented at various events, e.g.:

- International Green Week 2020 (IGW) in Berlin
- International Plant Exposition 2020 (IPM) in Essen
- International Travel Trade Show Berlin 2021 (ITB) in Berlin
- and other national and regional events

Furthermore, information is provided via various media, including

- Magazines of the professional and hobby segment
- Radio and television
- Twitter channel of the Julius Kühn-Institute.

Further Information:

<https://www.julius-kuehn.de/en/ag/international-year-of-plant-health-2020/>

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FIRST REPORT OF *CERATOCYSTIS FICICOLA* IN EUROPE

A new fungal threat for fig cultivation has been reported for the first time in the Mediterranean region. Field surveys were conducted, during spring and summer periods, in fig orchards of the Markopoulo, Attica, Greece in 2018. A *Ceratocystis* sp. was isolated from two neighboring fig orchards.



The affected trees showed symptoms of wilt and extensive crown defoliation, while some of them were dead (picture on the left). The morphological characteristics of this fungus were similar to that of *Ceratocystis ficicola*. Preliminary work using DNA sequences of the ITS region also confirmed the identity of the fungus (Tjamos et al. 2018). In 2019, *C. ficicola* was also detected in different localities of Euboea Island, Greece causing considerable damage in fig orchards.

The fungus *Ceratocystis ficicola* Kajitani & Masuya has been reported in Japan to cause a serious disease in fig orchards, where the disease has been known since the 1970's. The fungus is basically a soilborne pathogen that invades the roots and the main stem causing vascular wilt and eventually killing the trees. The pathogen is mainly dispersed by human activities and has spread into many areas of Japan that fig trees are grown. Dispersal of the pathogen in neighboring Mediterranean countries will endanger global fig production.



Indeed, according to production statistics (FAOSTAT 2017) the total annual world production of figs is 1,152,799 t, produced mostly in the Mediterranean region. Turkey with 305,689 t is the largest producer, followed by Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Iran, Morocco and Syria.

Tjamos EC, Tsopelas P, Soulioti N, Palavouzis S, Antoniou P, Paplomatas EJ, 2018. A serious infection of fig trees by Ceratocystis sp. in Greece: First report of the pathogen in Europe. Abstracts of the 19th Greek Phytopathological Congress, Hellenic Phytopathological Society, Athens, Greece, October 30-November 1, 2018, p. 31 (in Greek).

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FIRST REPORT OF *TUTA ABSOLUTA* IN TAIWAN

The Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Inspection and Quarantine (BAPHIQ) in Taiwan recently announced the occurrence of invasive tomato leafminer, *Tuta absoluta* in Central Taiwan https://www.baphiq.gov.tw/theme_data.php?theme=NewInfoListWS&id=17331 (in Chinese). It was found to occur on tomato in a few net-houses, but no incidence was observed in the nearby open fields. Effective control measures including a list of chemical pesticides have been recommended for the farmers to control its spread. In addition, the farmers have been requested to inspect the fields more frequently, and to examine the seedlings thoroughly, especially those to be moved inside the net-houses for planting. Relevant institutions have been asked to conduct the survey in major vegetable production areas of Taiwan to confirm the occurrence and spread of *T. absoluta*.

Tuta absoluta was first reported in India towards the end of 2014, and subsequently reported in Nepal (2016) Bangladesh (2016) and North-Eastern India (2017). Earlier this year, it has also been reported in Xinjiang, the northwest part of China, which shares border with Central Asia. Hence, it is possible that *T. absoluta* may have spread from the nearby Central Asian countries. However, *T. absoluta* has not been reported in any other countries in Southeast Asia, although it was reported in north-eastern India almost three years ago. With the recent incidence of *T. absoluta* in Taiwan, it is possible that the pest may already have been established in Southeast Asian countries, which should conduct surveys in major tomato as well as other Solanaceous crop production regions.

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IPM INNOVATION LAB HOSTS VIRTUAL PESTICIDE HANDLING AND SAFETY TRAININGS

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, international development programs like the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management (IPM IL, <https://ipmil.cired.vt.edu/>) at Virginia Tech must find new and innovative ways to connect with global stakeholders. While travel remains restricted, the IPM IL's newest project – Feed the Future Nepal Integrated Pest Management (FTFNIPM), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development – is delivering virtual trainings on pesticide handling and safety to its stakeholders in Nepal.

In Nepal, over-reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides has led to human, animal, and environmental health issues, including contaminated groundwater. Farmers often expose themselves to toxic chemicals due to limited access to protective equipment, use of expired chemicals, and by not following basic handling guidelines. Additionally, they also expose consumers through pesticide residues left on food. Efforts are needed to improve the quality of pesticides used in Nepal as well as knowledge about regulations, use of protective equipment, pesticide toxicity, and proper application.

FTFNIPM designed three pesticide safety webinars in June and July 2020 to reach stakeholders at both the government and provincial levels. Of the two trainings conducted thus far, nearly 200 participants have attended. Tim McCoy, an extension associate for Virginia Tech's Pesticide Programs, was the lead presenter of the webinars, covering topics such as proper pesticide disposal methods, mitigating pest resilience to chemicals, pesticide labeling, reducing exposure, and more. Other distinguished guests included Dr. Hari Bahadur KC, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development in Nepal, and Sahadev Prasad Humagain, Chief of the Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre in Nepal.

The virtual webinars aim to guide policymakers in enforcing the sale and use of chemical pesticides to mitigate all environment and health-related consequences with the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders including farmers, private pesticide retailers, and consultants; government extension agencies at the federal, provincial, and local levels; and other pesticide enforcement line agencies in Nepal. While the COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges in conducting in-person trainings, virtual trainings offer the unique opportunity to potentially facilitate greater inclusivity and discussion.

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The IAPPS Newsletter is published by the International Association for the Plant Protection Sciences and distributed in *Crop Protection* to members and other subscribers. *Crop Protection*, published by Elsevier, is the Official Journal of IAPPS.

IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described in the IAPPS Web Site www.plantprotection.org.

The *IAPPS Newsletter* welcomes news, letters, and other items of interest from individuals and organizations. Address correspondence and information to:

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