

Letter to the editor

FUNGUS EPIZOOTIC DETECTED ON *Lipaphis erysimi* POPULATIONS IN TWO CUBAN PROVINCES

Dear Sir:

Biological survey on cabbage (*Brassica oleraceae*) to detect aphid species and their natural enemies (entomophthoralean fungi mainly) was carried out on farms selected from Havana city, Havana, Cienfuegos and Granma provinces from 2003 to 2007. Eighteen farms belonging to 10 municipalities were sampled.

Aphid population was very low from 2003 to 2005 due to the predominant adverse climatic conditions. However, an increase on aphid population was observed for the first time ending 2005 and during 2006. In this period, a fungus epizootic was found infecting *Lipaphis erysimi* population in Catalina de Guines, San José de las Lajas (both municipalities in Havana province) and Alamar municipality (Havana city province).

The infections occur in aphid adults and nymphs. The fungus advanced stage is characterized by an intense orange coloration of aphid body and several protuberances deforming the body surface. The fungus seems to be *Neozygites* sp. Temperature of 20.22°C and relative humidity of 95.60% favoured its growing in field condition. Aphids with infection symptoms were transferred to the Entomology Laboratory, and the fungus was isolated to begin taxonomic identification and characterization studies.

This survey was part of an International Project entitled Microbial Pest Control in periurban and urban agricultural system (MICOSPA), developed in Cuba and other countries.

Sincerely yours,

J. Alemán, Jennifer Ravelo and María de los A. Martínez

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