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A SPECIES OF *TRIPLOSPORIUM* (ZYGOMYCETES:
ENTOMOPHTHORALES) INFECTING *MONONYCHELUS*
PROGRESSIVUS (ACARI: TETRANYCHIDAE)
IN VENEZUELA

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The spidermite *Mononychelus progressivus* Doreste is considered an economically important pest of cassava, *Manihot* spp. in Venezuela mostly during the dry season; very little is known about its natural enemy complex. During a routine count of the *M. progressivus* population (beginning of the rainy season, May 1981) in an experimental cassava plot to evaluate plant resistance to this mite, several dead mites were found on the underside of the leaves. When the cadavers were mounted in lactophenol and examined using phase contrast microscopy, the following structures typical of an entomophthoraceous fungus were observed: 1) non-ramified club-shaped or oval hyphal bodies with obtuse or slightly tapering ends 24-36 × 6-9 μm (average 28 × 8; n = 30, s = 4.3 and 0.8 = for length and width respectively) (Fig. 1) b) pyriform conidia with basal papillum and rugose wall 15-17 × 12-15 μm (average 16 × 14; n = 7, s = 1.5 and 1.1 respectively; larger dimension includes papillum length) and c) light-brown claviform anadhesive conidia 12-21 × 8-12 μm (average 19 × 10; n = 14, s = 1.8 and 1.3 for length and largest width respectively) (Fig. 2). These conidia were produced by the pyriform conidia at the end of a thin filament (2 μm diameter).

The morphological characteristics of this fungus are very similar to those of the one found infecting the mite *Eutetranychus banksi* (McGregor) in Florida, described as *Entomophthora floridana* (Weiser and Muma 1966) and considered now (Humber et al. 1981) to be *Triplosporium floridanum* (Weiser and Muma). The Venezuelan fungus also appears very similar to the one isolated from the mite *Tetranychus evansi* Baker and Pritchard and classified as a *Triplosporium* species (Humber et al). Measurements of structures of the three fungi are presented in Table 1. Based on the above considerations the Venezuelan fungus belongs to the genus *Triplosporium*, and most likely in the species *T. floridanum*.

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TABLE 1. SIZE OF STRUCTURES FROM *TRIPOSPORIUM* SPP. INFECTING THE MITES *E. BANKSI*, *T. EVANSI* AND *M. PROGRESSIVUS* IN FLORIDA, BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA RESPECTIVELY.

Locality	Hypthal bodies	Pyriiform papillate conidia	Anadhesive conidia
Florida ¹	Not given	13-18 μm \times 11-13 μm mean = 12 \times 15 μm	15-20 μm \times 10-20 μm Mean not given
Brazil ²	24-48 μm \times 3,5-6 μm Mean not given	12,4-17,7 μm \times 9,4-14,2 μm Mean = 14,9 \times 12,0 μm	15,3-20,1 μm \times 7,1-13 μm Mean = 18,2 \times 9,6 μm
Venezuela	24-36 μm \times 3,5-6 μm Mean = 28 \times 8 μm n = 30, s = 4,5, 0,8	15-17 μm \times 12-15 μm Mean = 16 \times 14 μm n = 7, s = 1,5, 1,1	12-21 μm \times 8-12 μm Mean = 19 \times 10 μm n = 14, s = 1,8, 1,3

¹From Weiser and Muma 1966.

²From Humber *et al.* 1981.

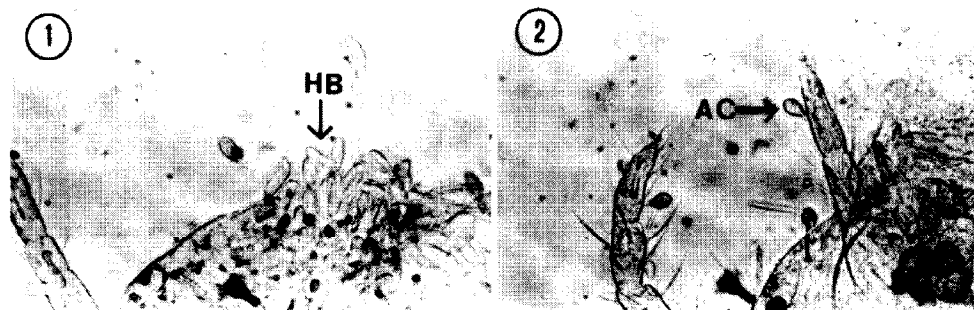


Fig. 1. Hyphal bodies (HB) of *Triplosporium* sp. being released from body of *Mononychelus progressivus*. 224X.

Fig. 2. An adhesive conidia (AC) of *Triplosporium* sp. attached to leg of *Mononychelus progressivus*. 264X.

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