

May 2014

Forewarning on giant African snail *Achatina fulica* infesting mulberry in Karnataka

Narendra Kumar J.B., Vinod Kumar, Sreenivas, B.T. and Bindroo, B.B.

Monsoon season is approaching and before that itself, now and then it is down pouring due to cyclone effect. Due to this, there is every chance of attack of giant African snail on mulberry especially in the hot spot areas of Kanakapura, Ramanagara and H.D. Kote areas of Karnataka. Hence sericulturists in these areas should be alert to tackle this pest.

Damage symptoms:

They feed on tender bark by girdling, and also devour tender stems, leaves and petiole. They are often seen clinging on to the leaf surface on mulberry and other crop plants grown in the vicinity. The infested leaves will have circular holes and also mucus secreted by them. This mucus substance often deters silkworms from feeding the leaves.

Life cycle:

Snails are hermophrodites and each one lays about 1000 eggs during their life span of 3 to 5 years in small groups of 50 to 300 in the soil at a shallow depth. The eggs hatch in about a week and the young ones reach sexual maturity in a year. They undergo resting stages of hibernation and aestivation during adverse situations encountered during winter and summer respectively to safeguard them.

Management:

Papaya stem splits may be heaped at several places inside the garden towards which snails get attracted and gets congregated. Such snails can be hand picked and destroyed by burning or dipping in 25% salt solution. Instead of papaya stem waste, papaya leaves or wet gunny cloths can also be used.

In case of severe infestation, 2.5% Metaldehyde can be used @2kg/acre. The Metaldehyde pellets may be placed in between 4 plants on alternate rows in the evening hours and next day dead & dying snails can be collected and destroyed. Metaldehyde is found to be safe to silkworms.



Snails on mulberry



Stem girdling by snails