importance of these observations lies in the fact that it is possible to use this beneficial effect of symbiotic association existing under natural conditions to reduce the application of phosphatic fertilizers to a great extent in mulberry cultivation specially under tropical condition without any reduction in the leaf yield. It is also possible to reduce the phosphatic fertilization to a great extent in mulberry cultivation by introducing an efficient strain of VA mycorrhiza in the rhizosphere of mulberry plants where the efficient strain of local endophytes is not available in the soil to increase the leaf yield. Besides these it may also be possible to use this beneficial effect of symbiosis to combat soil-borne root infecting pathogens and root nematodes.

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AN INDUCED LEAF DIFFERENTIATION MUTANT IN SESAMUM INDICUM L.

B. R. MURTY* and F. OROPEZA
Facultad Agronomia, Universidad del Zulia, Maracaibo, Venezuela.
*Present address: Nuclear Research Laboratory, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi 110012, India

DEVELOPMENTAL mutants affecting laminar growth are of interest as they influence the plant form and growth rate$^{1,2}$ and may involve only a small number of genetic substitutions$^3$. In addition to their use in the genetic manipulation of plant architecture amenable for combine harvest and improved yield at higher densities reported in various crop plants, the modified leaf types are valuable for basic studies on source-sink relationships, relative distribution of assimilates between vegetative and reproductive parts$^2$ and the evolution of leaf form in relation to distinct adaptive differences as in some geographical forms of Sesamum$^4$.

In a mutation breeding programme on Sesamum for resistance to charcoal rot using locally adapted cultivars in Venezuela, a narrow lamina mutation with only vestiges of lamina around the veins was detected in 1985 in a progeny in the M 4 generation of a variety Ven-52. The material was derived from an initial seed treatment of a dose of 60 kr of $\gamma$-radiation from a $^{60}$Co source. The secondary and tertiary veins of the lamina were disorganized in growth similar to the leaf mutants in cotton reported by Dilday et al.$^5$. The number and the size of capsules and seed size in the mutant were comparable to its normal counterpart. However, seed set in crosses with the mutant as female was low. This mutant is of practical interest as chemical defoliants and desicants are sprayed on the crop before harvest for easy mechanical harvest to get seeds free from tiny leaf bits. This mutant can reduce the cost of such a treatment. The genetics of this character was analysed in the subsequent generations and reported in this paper.

The selfed progeny Ven 52-4-N$_4$-$\text{H}_3$ in the M 4 generation segregated with 236 plants with normal lamina and 22 with narrow lamina, $\chi^2$ (1d) for 15:1 being 2.8539 ($P$ 0.05–0.10) indicating that the mutant genotype is duplicate-recessive. To confirm the segregation pattern, the next generation was examined with the selfed progenies of 44 randomly selected normals and 33 narrow lamina segregants (table 1) and six crosses, including reciprocals between
normal and narrow lamina sibs and one cross between two narrow lamina sibs (table 2). Standard $\chi^2$ analysis was used to test for deviations from the expected segregation ratios for heterogeneity.

Assuming duplicate recessive control for the mutant phenotype, the pattern of segregation of the 44 random progenies, the observed and expected distribution of the groups, segregating for normal vs narrow lamina in the ratios of 15:1 (A) and 3:1 (B) and the non-segregating (C) classes revealed good fit and homogeneity within each group. All the 33 progenies of narrow lamina segregants (D) bred true for the same as expected. The relative proportion of the 44 progenies of groups A, B and C was as expected in the ratio of 4:4:7 under duplicate recessive control of narrow leaf ($\chi^2$ 2df = 1.0556; $P$ 0.50-0.75).

The segregation in the crosses between narrow lamina and normal sibs revealed no reciprocal differences and confirmed that the abnormal leaf mutant is homozygous-recessive for two loci. The normal phenotype could be homozygous dominant or heterozygous for one or both the loci. The two loci are designated as $L_{n1} - L_{n1}$ and $L_{n2} - L_{n2}$.

The vascular system in the lamina of the mutant was poorer with only 1-2 vascular bundles/microscopic field ($\times$ 900) compared to 8-10 in the normal plants. This effect was not evident in the vascular system of the main stem, branches or the inflorescence indicating a localized pleitropic effect on the leaf only. The incorporation of the narrow lamina alleles into the genetic background of superior yielding phenotypes could be useful for improved higher harvest index and for basic physiological studies.

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COCCIDOXENOIDES PEREGRINA: A NEW PARASITOID OF PLANOCOCUS CITRI IN INDIA

A. KRISHNAMOORTHY and M. MANI
Division of Entomology and Nematology, Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore 560 089, India.

In recent years the mealybug Planococcus citri (Risso) has become a very serious pest of citrus in India. Insecticides failed to give adequate control of the pest in citrus orchards. During our search for natural enemies of P. citri in 1986–87, an encyrtid parasitoid, Coccidoxenoides peregrina (Timberlake) was collected from P. citri infested citrus orchards around Bangalore. This tiny wasp was found to produce 10–30% parasitism of P. citri in the field.

C. peregrina was found to attack other mealybug species, viz. Maconellicoccus hirsutus (Green) and Ferrisia virgata (Ckll.) besides P. citri but the development was successfully completed only on P. citri. This uniparental internal parasitoid was found to attack all the nymphal instars of mealybug including crawlers. Both male and female mealybugs were found parasitized by C. peregrina. It took 23–27 days to complete its development. Adults survived for 4–9 days at the room temperature of 28 ± 2°C.

Perusal of literature revealed that although several parasitoids and predators have been reported on P. citri infesting citrus in India1–2; the present record of C. peregrina appears to be first on P. citri. C. peregrina has been earlier described by Timberlake as Pauridia peregrina3. This parasitoid is earlier reported to be native to South China, Japan, Philippines, Hawaii, Fiji and Uganda4–6. C. peregrina was also utilized for the control of P. citri in California7, Italy8 and Bermuda8. Since the parasitoid is readily available in India, the mass rearing of C. peregrina on P. citri and releases in citrus orchards will be useful to suppress the population of P. citri.

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ENCENTRIDOPHORUS SIMILIS (ACARINA: UNIONICOLIDAE) AN ACTIVE PREDATOR OF MOSQUITO LARVAE

R. RAJENDRAN and R. S. PRASAD
Department of Zoology, University of Kerala, Trivandrum 695 381, India.

Predatory feeding behaviour of certain species of mites has been reported earlier1–4. In order to study the biology of autochthonous predatory and parasitic mites of mosquitoes, free-living and parasitic water mites were collected from an uncultivated paddy field and from adult mosquitoes within Trivandrum city limits during February to April. The area of collection is characterized by the presence of highly polluted water rich in organic matter, thick growth of aquatic vegetation and a variety of aquatic organisms like ostracods, copepods, nymphs of dragon and damselflies, etc.

Among the free-living mites collected, adult females of Encentridophorus similis belonging to the family Unionicolidae were found to actively predate on first instar larvae of Aedes albopictus. So far no report has appeared on mites belonging to family Unionicolidae feeding on mosquito larvae. During