



Agriculture & Horticulture
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



New Project

FV 381a

Itersonilia spp.- A survey into its prevalence and severity in UK herb crops (continuation 2011)

Project Number: FV 381a

Title: *Itersonilia* spp.- A survey into its prevalence and severity in UK herb crops (continuation 2011)

Start and end dates: 01 February 2011 to 30 November 2011

Project Leader: Cathryn Lambourne

Industry Representative: Tom Davies, Malvern Herbs

Location: Stockbridge Technology Centre Ltd

HDC Cost: £ 5,400

Background and project objectives:

To continue to survey UK herb growers (protected and outdoor) to investigate the prevalence of *Itersonilia* leaf blight on umbelliferous plants.

Unexplained leaf-blight symptoms had been observed on both dill and coriander since 2003 (Peter Knight pers. comm.). Following the receipt of a sample in the STC Plant Clinic *Itersonilia perplexans* was confirmed on dill in September 2009 for the 1st time in the UK (C Lambourne [STC] & Dr C Lane [Fera]). Two subsequent samples (1 dill, 1 coriander) were diagnosed with the same fungal infection later in the same season.

Itersonilia spp. have a relatively wide host range. They can be pathogenic on members of the Apiaceae (cumin, parsley, anise, carrot, coriander/cilantro, dill, caraway, fennel, parsnip, celery, Queen Anne's Lace), and also on members of the Asteraceae (gerbera, chrysanthemum and aster and perhaps tarragon).

It is particularly important to establish whether this disease has the potential to threaten high volume herbs such as parsley and coriander.

A survey of the 2010 season identified that *Itersonilia* leaf-blight; particularly on dill was becoming more of a problem. Sample numbers received was not high; however there was a clear indication that the problem was most severe toward the early autumn (September) when cooler wetter weather provided optimum conditions for spore dispersal of the pathogen and subsequent disease development. The current project work (FV 381) is still ongoing, however following dissemination of results gathered to-date at a recent BHTA meeting (12.10.10) members felt that a continuation of the survey was required to get a good indication of the current problem.

A second season will help provide further detail on seasonal variability and whether any trend or increase in disease incidence is occurring.

In addition to a continuation of the survey work it is proposed that a seed-testing element should be included in the work in 2011 to gather information on possible sources of the infection.

A second phase of the work is also proposed to investigate the pathogenicity and speciation of isolates collected.

Further information

Email the HDC office (hdc@hdc.ahdb.org.uk), quoting your HDC number, alternatively contact the HDC at the address below.

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