

BLACK CRUST - A POST-REFOLIATION LEAF FALL PROBLEM ON

RUBBER ¹

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In the Amazonia region, large monoclonal plantations are being established under the government-sponsored planting PROBOR project. Apart from Microcyclus ulei and Thanatephorus cucumeris endemic to the region, Catacauma huberi has also recently assumed importance as the cause of post-refoliation leaf fall on field plantings of immature and mature rubber. The leaf spot disease causes a slow progressive fall of mature leaves on many susceptible clones in Pará, Amazonas, Acre and Rondônia. Of high susceptibility are IAN 717 and IAN 873, two of the three clones widely used in the Amazonia. Also liable to infection are H. benthamiana and the ordinary seedling tree. H. pauciflora, H. camporum and H. guianensis seem able to resist an attack by the leaf spot. In an observation on the progress of the disease in a 7-year-old IAN 717 in Manaus, full development of the leaf spot disease appeared some 2 - 3 months after the annual leaf-change, followed by a gradual but complete fall of the affected leaves in another 3 - 4 months (January to April). The resultant abnormal leaf-change, induced during a rainy period some 3 months ahead of natural wintering, led to the new leaves being attacked by Microcyclus, Thanatephorus and Colletotrichum, and the pest such as thrips. As a result, such trees are

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considerably weakened before the main annual leaf-change which normally follows from June to July .