

Journal of Biological Control, 26 (3): 288–290, 2012

Research Note

Management of bacterial wilt of tomato through an innovative approach

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ABSTRACT: Bacterial wilt of tomato caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum* is dreaded disease causing severe yield loss (25-75%) in farmer's field. A field experiment at demonstration farm of KVK West Tripura was conducted for evaluation of different chemicals, botanicals and bioformulation against the disease. The study revealed that all the treatments were significantly effective over the control. However, soil drench with antibiotic @ 100 ppm was found best with lowest (23.6%) disease incidence and highest yield (228.2 q/ha). This was followed by Copper Oxychloride in terms of disease incidence (28.4%) and Biofor Pf in terms of yield (220.6 q/ha). Highest disease incidence (78.67%) with lowest yield (86.5 q/ha) was recorded in control plot .

KEY WORDS: Bacterial wilt, management, tomato.

(Article chronicle: Received: 3-2-2012 Revised: 69-8-2012 Accepted: 10-8-2012)

Bacterial wilt of tomato, *Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill, incited by *Ralstonia solanacearum* (Smith) Yabuuchi *et al.,* (Syn. *Pseudomonas solanacearum* E.F. Smith) is one of the devastating diseases affecting vascular bundles of plants. The disease causes 25-75% yield loss of solanaceous vegetables in India (Rao and Sohi, 1977). The disease is difficult to manage because of its wide host range, the exceptional ability of the pathogen to survive in the roots of non-host plants and in the soil (Kumar and Sood, 2001). *R. solanacearum* has a very wide host range and almost all the solanaceous vegetables are susceptible. In India, plant species belonging to 37 families are attacked by bacterial wilt pathogen (Shekhawat *et al.,* 1992). Perusal of literature indicated that considerable efforts were made to manage the disease in various crops and in different places with the use of host resistance attributes, change in cultural practices, use of chemicals and bioagents (Dubey *et al.,* 1996; Biswas and Singh, 2008; Kishore *et al.,* 1996). The present study was carried out to find out most effective control measure against the bacterial wilt of tomato under the agro-climatic conditions of Tripura where severe outbreak of the disease occurs on tomato in tilla (hillock) land consisting of sandy loam soil.

The present investigation was carried out in the Instructional cum Demonstration Farm of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, West Tripura during the winter crop season of 2008-09 and 2009-10 (October to April). Tomato genotype *viz.,* Arka Vikash was used in this experiment. The experiment was set up by transplanting 20 day old seedlings in a bacterial sick plot using RBD design of four replications to compare 5 treatments (including control). Transplanting was made in 2.5 x 5 m^2 plots with 60 x 45 cm^2 spacing between rows and plants. Fertilizer schedule was FYM @ 10 ton/ha, NPK @ 120:80:60 Kg/ha. Half of N and full doses of FYM, P_2O_5 and K_2O was applied as basal and the remaining half of N was top dressed after transplanting in two splits. One weeding was done at 20 days after transplanting. Four irrigations were given starting from immediate irrigation and then at 15 days interval. The number of plants wilted per plot was recorded starting from 15 days after transplanting and then at 15 days intervals following the method of Mew and Ho (1976). Bacterial ooze test was performed on the wilted plants to confirm the disease.

Four treatment combinations were tried *viz.,* 2 chemicals (Plantomycin @ 100 ppm and Copper Oxychloride @ 0.3% w/v), 2 botanicals (Hing / Asafoetida and Turmeric @ 1:5) and a bioformulation (Biofor Pf @ 100 g/plant (a *Pseudomonas flourescens* and *Trichoderma harzianum* based bioformulation developed by Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat) against the bacterial wilt disease of tomato. Chemicals and botanicals

were applied as soil drenching @ 400 ml/plant, bioformulation was applied in circular ring, 15 cm away from the plant base @ 100 g/plant. For soil application of Biofor Pf, 1 kg of the formulation was mixed with 10 kg dry cow dung and applied the mixture @ 100 gm/plant. All the management approaches were tried for three applications i.e., at 15, 30 and 45 days after transplanting.

Percentage of mortality due to bacterial wilt was recorded per plot. The data were analysed using Fisher's method of analysis of variance. The per cent values were transformed to corresponding angular values before analysis.

All the chemicals, botanicals and bioformulation significantly reduced the wilt incidence as compared with inoculated control (Table 1). Lowest disease incidence (23.6%) was recorded in Plantomycin treated plot with highest yield (228.2 q/ha), this was followed by soil drenching with copper oxychloride and asafoetida: turmeric: water for disease incidence. Highest yield was recorded in Biofor Pf treated plot (220.0 q/ha) but highest wilt per cent (34.68%). This was followed by soil drench with copper oxychloride and asafoetida: turmeric: water with a yield of 209.6 q/ha and 182.1q/ha respectively. Lowest disease incidence with highest yield recorded in the Plantomycin treated plot might be due to immediate antibacterial action of the chemical on the bacterial population surviving in the soil which causes quick/direct death of the bacteria and indirectly helps the plant for maximum and efficient nutrient uptake, leading to the higher yield. Plantomycin acts on ribosome and inhibits protein synthesis, is acts directly on the microorganism as killing agent or as inhibitor of growth and reproduction by binding to bacterials. Dutta *et al.* (2009) reported that antibiotics act against bacteria by interfering with their enzyme systems and then producing physiological disturbance which first inhibit and then they destroy the bacteria. In the effect of bioformulation for the management of bacterial wilt of tomato, bioformulation Biofor Pf was found effective in minimizing the disease (Table 1). The efficacy of the bioagent might be attributed to the production of siderophore like metabolite which has strong inhibitory effect on *R. solanacearum* (Ciampi *et al.,* 1997). The fact behind the reduced disease incidence recorded in Biofor Pf treated plot is that fluorescent pseudomonas continued rapidly to colonize and inhibit certain components of the root zone microflora along with rich substrate (like cow dung). The antagonist beneficially alters the composition of the rhizosphere leading to reduced plant disease incidence. Similarly, higher yield observed in the Biofor Pf treated plot might be associated with reduction in disease incidence, increased uptake of soil nutrients, rejuvenation of soil and enhanced plant growth regulators (Anonymous, 2008). Jha *et al.* (2005) reported that soil application of *Pseudomonas spp.* besides reducing disease incidence helps in growth of the tomato plants.

Earlier, soil application of asafoetida (1 gm) + turmeric powder (5 gm) in 10 litres of water was reported as an effective measure against tomato wilt disease in North East India (Anonymous, 2005). Copper oxychloride has been reported earlier as an effective chemical against bacterial disease of tomato, rasp berry, surat and sour cherry (www.google.co.in). Copper ion (Cu^{2+}) is toxic to

Table 1. Effect of chemicals, botanicals and bioformulation on the bacterial wilt and yield of tomato (mean of two year data)

Treatment	Disease Incidence (%)	% disease reduction over control	Yield (q/ha) **
T_1 = Soil drench with plantomycin (@ 100 ppm)	23.6 (29.06)	70.00	228.2
T_2 = Soil drench with copper oxychloride (@ 0.3% w/v	28.4 (32.20)	63.90	209.6
T_3 = Soil drench with asafoetida: Turmeric powder: Water (@ 1 gm: 5 gm: 10,000ml)	31.60 (34.20)	59.83	182.1
T_4 = Soil application of Biofor Pf (@ 100 gm/plant)	34.68 (36.08)	55.92	220.0
T_5 = Control (No chemicals + No botanicals + No Formulation)	78.67 (62.49)	–	86.5
CD (P = 0.05)	2.33	–	4.62

* Data in the parentheses are arcsine transformed value

** Data are mean two years and four replications

all bacterial cells because it reacts with Sulphydril (–SH) groups of certain amino acids and causes denaturation of proteins and enzymes. The possible reasons for not getting total control of the disease in the present study could be improper and/or no coverage of bacterial sick soil by the treatments to the whole rhizosphere, failure of the treatment to penetrate the cells of already infected plants where bacterial cell still viable and infective and also the endemic nature of the disease.

During the present investigation an observation was recorded that plants treated with asafoetida + turmeric + water survived longer with more effective leaves and root system than the other treatments. This might be due to, application of asafoetida and turmeric creates a microbe friendly environment for the beneficial rhizosphere microflora, which helps the plants in continuous uptake of nutrients with profuse root system and leaves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi for the financial support. The valuable suggestion and encouragement received from Dr. V. Venkatasubramanian, ADG (AE), ICAR, New Delhi, Dr. A. K. Gogoi, ZPD, Zone-III, ICAR, Meghalaya-3 and Mr. P. Kanungo, GS, Sri Ramakrishna Seva Kendra, 81, Bondel Road, Kolkata in various spheres of work is highly appreciated.

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