

Notes on a Soft Rot of Cotton Bolls in the West Indies
caused by ~~a~~ species of Phytophthora.

The Soft Rot of cotton bolls, up to the present only reported from the West Indies, is a disease which, under certain conditions may assume proportions of decided economic importance. It was first reported from Montserrat by Robson⁽¹⁾ in March 1911 on a variety of Sea Island cotton known as Rivers; unopened green bolls with blackened tips were very common but only bolls near the ground were diseased. In 1917, Nowell⁽²⁾ described a disease of cotton bolls in St. Vincent in which the wall of the boll turned brown and was covered with a glistening powder or white cottony envelope, and both this and the Montserrat disease ^{were} found to be due to phytophthora. Nowell further remarks that although a spell of dry weather may check the disease, it is manifest again after two or three days of rain, whilst Robson mentions in his report, a particularly wet season. It is now known that heavy or prolonged rain is a necessary condition for the spread of the soft rot and it is presumed that infection is brought about by motile zoospores being splashed from the soil on to the lower bolls of the cotton plant⁽³⁾. Infection usually takes place at the tip, or at least, the rot is first visible at this end of the boll.