

SECTION II: Cushion infection.

Part 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

The witches' broom disease of cacao first attracted attention in Surinam in 1895, and the rapid spread of the disease throughout most of the cacao-growing areas of Trinidad, which started in 1928, has led to a great deal of investigation into the disease.

It has caused great damage wherever it spread, and when, in 1915, Stahel discovered the cause to be a Basidiomycete fungus, a new species of Marasmius, he called the species perniciosus, because of the virulence of the disease.

Of late years, research has been chiefly directed towards effective control, and Baker, Crowdy and Thorold (1) sum up this work to 1940, with especial regard to the production of vegetative brooms, and little work has been carried out in recent years concerning the effects of the disease on the reproductive parts of the cacao trees.

It was considered that it would not be out of place to gather together information on pod and cushion infection from previous literature, and to add to this, certain observations on those subjects. Added to this are experiments on the artificial inoculation of both pods and cushions, and an experiment on the control of infected cushions carried out at River Estate, Diego Martin.

Thus the whole can be divided into five fairly distinct portions, which fall together into two main sections:

SECTION I: Pod infection.

Part 1. General observations on diseased pods.

Part 2. Artificial inoculation of pods with the disease.