

2. Review 1. Preface.

Hibiscus esculentus L. (Abelmoschus esculentus Moench.) has been recorded by de Candolle as a native of tropical or subtropical Africa. The species is now cultivated in most territories lying within forty degrees of the equator and has been recognised and tended as a food plant in its native continent for close on a thousand years.

In Trinidad, the plant is grown typically as a house-yard and market-garden crop and is especially esteemed among the East Indian population. The popularity of the vegetable appears to vary from year to year, but at the present time, due perhaps to the war-time food growing campaign, the total acreage under okra in Trinidad is relatively speaking quite great.

Okra is a sturdy fast-growing annual or short life-cycle perennial, and apart from harbouring a few leaf-infecting fungi of minor importance, was not definitely known, until recently, to be subject to any serious fungal or bacterial disease in Trinidad. Within the past year or two, however, a wilt disease has become increasingly prevalent and appeared on the Department of Agriculture nursery at St. Augustine for the first time in 1943.

The importance of okra as a food crop, and the potential menace of any wilt disease are such that an enquiry into the disease was considered necessary. The account which follows embodies the work of the author during 1944, and is intended to be indicative rather than final.

No cultures or cross-inoculations were made, and perithecial fruits were not obtained from the roots of diseased okra plants. Orton (1900) accepted Smith's decision on nomenclature, and maintained that okra never failed to contract wilt when planted in fields known to be infested with the cotton wilt organism. Clinton (1908) referred to okra wilt in Connecticut