

Book review

Firman, I. D. and J. M. Waller: Coffee berry disease and other *Colletotrichum* diseases of coffee. Phytopathological Papers, no. 20. Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Kew, Surrey, England, 1977; 53 pp., 9 text-figures, price £1.80.

Coffee berry disease (CBD) is one of the major problems of coffee cultivation in East Africa, with many interesting etiological and epidemiological aspects. The reviewers have drawn together results from many investigators. They have undoubtedly done a good job and this booklet presents the existing knowledge in a clearly arranged form (although with quite a few printing errors).

Because of its great economic importance much attention and research has been directed to this disease during the past quarter of a century, notably in Kenya. The disease is caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum coffeanum* of which the delimitation is still a matter of opinion, even after revision by Von Arx (1957, 1970) of the genera *Colletotrichum* and *Gloeosporium*. Firman and Waller discuss these opinions but avoid taking a position. It is not clear whether they, for example, follow the restriction of this species by Hindorf to only those strains which cause CBD or whether they still include other saprophytic strains occurring on coffee.

Since *Colletotrichum* species are always present on the coffee plant and with the long-standing confusion on the delimitation of CBD fungus, there have been various schools of thought on epidemiology and on the ways of controlling the disease. Firman and Waller were themselves involved in these controversies. This may be the reason that although they give a fairly good survey of the literature, they nevertheless fail to underline the importance of, for instance, the contributions of Muller (1968) in overturning the ideas of Nutman and Roberts about the main source of inoculum. Relevant publications of, for example Mogk, Steiner and Hindorf receive little attention, perhaps partly because of language barriers. It does not, however, seriously affect the value of this booklet as a handy guide to knowledge of CBD.

This booklet is valuable not only to coffee specialists but also to those interested in phytopathological principles. Interesting in that respect is, for instance, the effect of fungicide treatment on the balance of *Colletotrichum* species in the host.

In view of the complexity of the subject and because of the various open questions about CBD, it is a pity that the booklet does not contain a summary. One would have expected that the authors had rounded up with such a summary and with suggestions as to how these still open questions could best be solved.

T. Limonard