

First Report About the Spread of *Nectria Haematococcus* in Adjara–Guria Region Citrus Plantations

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Abstract:

The introduction of Citrus cultures to Georgia can be traced back to distant past but their cultivation on an industrial scale began in the early 19th century. Currently, citrus occupy a total area of 10,823 hectares throughout Georgia, with 80% of that area concentrated in the Adjara–Guria region. According to FAOSTAT data, Georgia ranks 30th among the 73 citrus-producing countries worldwide in terms of production volume. Annually, 60,000 to 80,000 tons of citrus are produced, yielding an export revenue of 14 to 15 million USD. In Georgia, mandarin is regarded as a key agro–food product, with their exports significantly contributing to the country’s economy. Mandarins are exported both as fresh, standard fruit and as concentrates derived from processing non–standard fruit.

In order to detect and identify citrus pests and diseases, phytosanitary monitoring was systematically conducted in 2023–2025 within the framework of the Shota Rustaveli Georgian National Science Foundation project №FR–22–2178. Monitoring of citrus plantations in 4 municipalities of the Adjara–Guria region (Kobuleti, Khelvachauri, Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri) revealed that the phytosanitary condition of citrus plantations is not very favorable. Citrus plantations were affected by a wide range of pests and diseases, which is due to many factors, such as: global climate change, aging (depreciated) plantations, the region’s location and soil–climatic conditions, improper agro–technical works and various biotic and abiotic factors.