

Pak. J. Bot., 15 (2): 121, 1983.

**ASCOCHYTA BLIGHT OF LENTIL –A NEW DISEASE
IN PAKISTAN**

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During spring 1982, lentil (*Lens culinaris* Medic.) sown at National Agricultural Research Centre, was found heavily damaged by a foliar pathogen. The symptoms produced were the appearance of 1 to 4mm, circular to irregular, light brown to brown, necrotic spots on the leaves, stems and pods. Seeds from the affected pods were shrivelled and discoloured. The fungus produced pycnidia in the centre of the lesions. Pycnidia were globose to sub-globose; dark, ostiolate and measured 75.0 to 225.0 μm in diam. Conidia were hyaline, straight or slightly curved, mostly bicelled, occasionally three celled. Bicelled conidia measured 10.0 – 20.0 μm x 3.5-5.0 μm while three celled conidia ranged between 17.5-20.0 μm x 4.5-6.2 μm . The fungus was identified as *Ascochyta lentis* by Bond & Vassil, as also reported by Morrel & Sheppard, 1981.

The fungus was isolated on PDA from infected seeds. Lentil seedling grown from healthy seeds when inoculated with spores and mycelial suspension of the fungus developed typical symptoms within 7 days of inoculation. This is a first report of *A. lentis* as a pathogen of lentil in Pakistan.

The fact that the fungus isolated from seeds produced disease on the seedlings indicates that the blight fungus is seed borne in nature. Increasing seed exchange between different countries, not only calls for stricter quarantine measures but also for more closer monitoring of the disease in lentil growing areas and its control by seed treatment.

Reference

Morral, R.A.A. and J.W. Sheppard. 1981. *Ascochyta* blight of lentils in Western Canada, 1978 to 1980. *Canadian Plant Diseases Survey*, 61 : 7 – 13.