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Studies on Feeding Differences of Coconut Black-headed Caterpillar on Arecaceae Palms

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*A study was conducted to assess the difference in infestation of the coconut black-headed caterpillar, *Opisina arenosella* on three arecaceae palms including oil palm. It was found that coconut and palmyra palms were most susceptible to *O. arenosella* infestation whereas the oil palm was least affected. Variation in the infestation is attributed to the presence and position of lignin in the leaf fibres. Presence of more lignin in the S_2 layer of secondary cell wall in oil palm caused it to be non-palatable to the pest. Coconut and palmyra palms had more lignin in the S_3 layer which allowed the pest to feed up to the S_2 layer causing heavy damage. Though lignin content is highest in coconut palms, it did not cause any impact on pest incidence and intensity as it is concentrated in the S_3 layer compared to S_2 in case of oil palm.*

Keywords: Oil palm, coconut black-headed caterpillar, arecaceae, palmyra, lignin.

