Title Introducing *Botrytis cinerea* as agent of kiwifruits gray mold disease in north of Iran

Author Hossein Taheri, J. Ershad and M. Golmohammadi

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Abstract

The origin of the Kiwifruit (*Actinidia deliciosa* C.S.Liang, Fam. Actinidiaceae) is the south of Asia. During 1381, the Mazandaran province produced 60,000 tons of fruits from more than 2200 ha. of Kiwifruit plantations. Kiwifruit is an important economical fruit crop in the north of Iran. Gray mold is the most important Kiwifruit disease in cool storages. In a survey of Kiwifruit cool storages during the last few years some rotted fruits were observed. Characteristically, the rot begins at the stem end of undamaged fruit and advances evenly towards the distal end. Diseased flesh is glassy and water soaked. Externally, the affected region is darker than the healthy parts of the fruit. At an advanced stage, fluffy mycelium, at first white, then becoming gray, emerges from the rotted fruit and at the end, spores were seen on the mycelium. In order to isolate the fungus, small pieces between infected and uninfected parts of the fruit were transferred to PDA culture medium plates and finally purified by the single-spore method. Based on morphological characters and references, the fungus was identified as *Botrytis cinerea* Pere. exFr. Pathogenecity of fungus was tested by inoculation the stem end of fruit with spores and same agent was reisolated from infected fruit. This is the first report of Kiwifruit infection by *Botrytis cinerea* in Iran.