

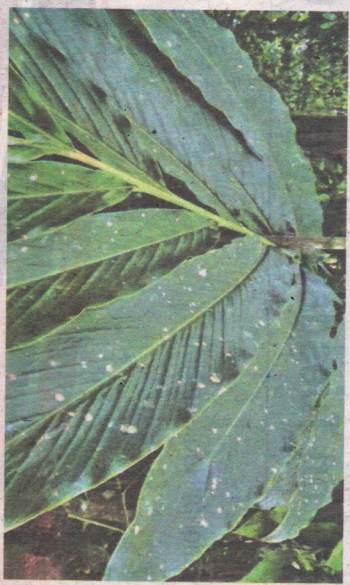
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# Idukki's farmers worry about bouts of 'yellow rain'

Leaves in cardamom plantations discoloured, chemical tests on to analyse cause

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**IDUKKI/KOCHI:** Kerala's Idukki district received 'yellow' rain at some places on Monday, causing apprehension that the droplets were carrying harmful chemicals. The yellow mist created fears of damage to cardamom plantations at Moolakkada in the high range Kunchithanney village. This is the second episode of raindrops with the hue falling here in a fortnight. It left powdery spots and discoloured cardamom leaves. Many people feared it



**MYSTERY SPOTS:** Impact of yellow rain on the vegetation in Idukki district. — PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

was 'acid rain,' but scientists ruled out the possibility, since the stains could be washed clean and had not burnt the leaves.

Sudhakar S., plant protection specialist at Bapooji Krishi Vigyan Kendra (BKVK) at Santhampara, said

preliminary examination did not indicate acid presence.

"The leaves could be washed clean, which would not be the case if it was caused by acid. It did not seem to have been caused by fungi either, but an examination of samples is under way at the National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru. The results are expected in a couple of days," he said.

M.A. Siji, agricultural officer at Pallivasal, said the phenomenon was concentrated over a half acre area at Moolakkada. "Nobody saw yellow rain.

They only spotted the powder on the leaves.

While some leaves partially dried up, it was not strong enough to cause crop damage. A farmer caught in the showers did not report any health issues," she said.

### Foul smell

However, Titus Thomas, ward member, Pallivasal panchayat, said such rains had occurred for two weeks, leaving a foul smell afterwards. Rajappan Kunnumpurathu, an affected farmer, said it occurred over an area between the Pallivasal and Bison Valley panchayats.



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