

Biopesticide to control whitefly attack in coconut trees

Biopesticide to control whitefly attack in coconut trees

Agri. scientists demonstrate spraying technique to farmers

STAFF REPORTER
ERODE

Scientists from the National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (NBAIR), Bengaluru, demonstrated the use of *Isaria fumosoreseae*, a biological pesticide, to effectively treat coconut trees infested with Rugose Spiraling Whitefly (*Aleurodicus rugioperculatus*), an invasive pest, at a farm in Gobichettipalayam here.

Officials at the Department of Agriculture said that the whitefly sucks out sap from the leaves resulting in loss of water and nutrients. The fly attracts ants and also encourages growth of fungus.

A team comprising G. Sivakumar, principal scientist, Division of Insect Systematics, NBAIR, K. Selvaraj, scientist (Entomology), and M. Kannan, assistant professor, Department of Agricul-



Biopesticide is sprayed on whitefly infested trees at a coconut grove in Kottupullampalayam village in Gobichettipalayam, Erode.

tural Entomology, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore, explained the application of the biopesticide at a coconut grove in Kottupullampalayam village.

The scientists said that *Isaria fumosoreseae*, an entomopathogenic fungus, should be diluted in water and

sprayed on infected leaves, which kills the pest and its eggs. They said that this was the first time that the biopesticide was being demonstrated to farmers in the State. Whitefly was first reported in Palakkad and Pollachi in 2016 and had spread to other parts of South India, they said.