POWDERY MILDEW INFECTION ON SOME EGYPTIAN BREAD WHEAT CULTIVARS IN RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.

El-Shamy, M. M.*; M. E. A. Sallam and H. M. F. Awad **

* Wheat Dis. Res. Dept., Plant Pathology Research Institute, ARC.
** Maize, Sugar Crops and Foliages Dis. Res. Dept., Plant Pathology Research Institute, ARC, Giza, Egypt.

ABSTRACT

Wheat powdery mildew, caused by the biotrophic fungus *Blumeria graminis* (DC) E.O. Speer f. sp. *tritici* Em. Marchal, is one of the most severe foliar diseases attacking this crop, affecting wheat production under Mediterranean basin conditions through the last few years. Four bread wheat cultivars i.e., Sakha-93, Gemmeiza-7, Gemmeiza-10, and Giza-160 as a check were evaluated to artificial inoculation of powdery mildew under field conditions. The tested wheat cultivars showed susceptible responses to powdery mildew with fluctuated values in 2010 and 2011 seasons. In 2010 season, the tested cultivars showed high levels of disease severity, ranged from 35 to 87 % (Gemmeiza-7 and Gemmeiza-10, respectively). While, in 2011 lower levels were recorded, from 6.00 up-to 15% (Sakha-93 and Gemmeiza-10, respectively). Area under disease progress curve (AUDPC) was correlated with disease severity during the two seasons. Also, the yield components, the thousand grain weight and the grain yield/m² were affected by disease severities with different values for each cultivar. High air temperature, wind speed and mild relative humidity played an important role in increasing powdery mildew infection level in 2010 season.

Keywords: wheat, powdery mildew, *Blumeria graminis* f. sp. *tritici*.

INTRODUCTION

Powdery mildew, caused by the biotrophic fungus *Blumeria graminis* (DC) E.O. Speer f. sp. *tritici* Em. Marchal, is one of the most serious foliar diseases on bread Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.). In the last few years the importance of powdery mildew has increased on the commercially grown cultivars in Egypt due to the favorable environmental conditions. This disease is widely spreads during years with relatively mild weather during February and March. Mild temperatures, high relative humidity and dense stands of wheat favor epiphytotic spread of the disease. Volunteer wheat is important for survival of *Blumeria graminis* in areas where fall seeded wheat is grown (Mehta, 1993). Ascospores and conidia serve as primary inocula. Both spores are wind-blown with ascospores dispersed in midsummer and conidia disperse in spring. Both types of spores germinate when the relative humidity reaches 85-100%. Free water on host tissue is not necessary for spore germination (Jarvis et al., 2002).

Infection during tillering, stem elongation and booting phases has great influence on yield, particularly when it occurs early (Bowen et al., 1991). This disease results in reduction in grain size, test weight and ultimately lower yield. Greatest yield losses occur when the flag leaf becomes severely infected by heading. Imani et al. (2002) stated that powdery mildew caused
El-Shamy, M. M. et al.

by *Blumeria graminis* f. sp. *tritici* is becoming a limiting factor in production of durum wheat (*Triticum turgidum* L. sp. *durum*) in the Mediterranean climate. Losses over 34% of the yield have been recorded (Pearce *et al*., 1996). Also, Costamilan (2005) stated that wheat powdery mildew, reduced grain yields by 10% to 62% in Brazil.

The disease could be controlled by genetic resistance of the host (Brown *et al*., 1997) but the pathogen has physiological specialization, which enables it to infect wheat cultivars that remained resistant for years. The use of systemic fungicides is a reliable method to control the disease. This work was conducted to study the incidence and severity of powdery mildew on the yield of some bread wheat cultivars which commercially grown in Middle Delta Region.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Field experiment was carried out at the farm of Gemmeiza Research Station which located at 30.97\(^0\) N; 31.122 E and 4.00m elevation, Gharbia governorate during 2010 and 2011 growing seasons under artificial inoculation of powdery mildew. The experimental design was a randomized complete block with three replicates. Four bread wheat varieties were randomly allocated to plot of 4.2 m\(^2\) (each consists of six rows with 3.5 m length and 20 cm apart). Untreated plots were compared with plots kept nearly disease-free with four foliar applications of two alternated fungicides: Flusilazole (Punch40% EC) and Propiconazole (Tilt 25%EC). The experiment was surrounded by plots of durum wheat varieties as highly susceptible source of powdery mildew (Nsarellah *et al*., 2000). To carry out experiments, plots as well as the border were sown with adapted machine.

**Preparation of powdery mildew inocula:**

The inocula source were obtained from field grown durum wheat (*Triticum turgidum* L. var. *durum*) plants infected naturally with *Blumeria graminis* DC f. sp. *tritici* at the Gemmeiza Research Station during 2010 and 2011 winter growing seasons. The inoculum was multiplied and propagated on healthy durum wheat plants 20-30 days old. This inoculation was carried out by shaking conidia from potted infected plants on potted healthy plants under greenhouse conditions (Fig. 1 A&B).

**Field inoculation Technique:**

The experimental plots were inoculated by dispersing conidia from the infected plants onto the leaves of the durum wheat border plants, which surrounded the experiment to promote homogeneous disease spread as well as by putting the inoculated plants inside each plot, one infected pot/plot (Fig 2).
Fig. 1: Conidia of powdery mildew multiplied on durum wheat plants under greenhouse conditions.

Fig. 2: Illustrate infected plants grown in pots used for inoculation inside the plot plants of the tested cultivar.

**Powdery mildew assessment:**
Mildew severity was scored by estimating the percentage of leaf area infected on the whole plot of each cultivar using the modified Cobb scale 0 to 100% (Peterson et al. 1948). Disease severity assessments were taken five
times at 10-day intervals during the season; the first scoring was done when
the majority of lines were in the late booting stage (GS 45), and the last
scores were taken around GS 75, when the most susceptible cultivar had
reached maximum severity. These scores were used to calculate the area
under disease progress curve (AUDPC ) as described by Pandy( 1989). The
AUDPC was estimated as follows:

\[
\text{AUDPC} = D \left[ \frac{1}{2} \left( Y_1 + Y_k \right) + \left( Y_2 + Y_3 + \cdots + Y_{k-1} \right) \right]
\]

where:
- \( D \) = Days between two consecutive recording (time intervals)
- \( Y_1 + Y_k \) = Sum of the first and last scores.
- \( Y_2 + Y_3 + \cdots + Y_{k-1} \) = Sum of all in between disease scores.

Yield assessment:
When plants reached the full maturity stage, 25 main tillers were
selected at random along two diagonals from one corner to the opposite one
of the plot. Spikes of all plots in the experiment were hand harvested,
threshed and yield components were measured including the followings:
1-One thousand grain weight (gm).
2-Total weight of grain (kg) per m²

The reduction (%) in each component was calculated according to the
formula described by Evans et al., (1973) as follow;

\[
\text{Reduction (Loss)} \% = \left[ \frac{D_2 - D_1}{D_2} \right] \times 100
\]

Where, \( D_1 \) = Yield of infected plots
\( D_2 \) = Yield of protected plots.

Weather Data:
Meteorological data were taken from the weather station at Gemmeiza
Res. Station during months of powdery mildew appearance from January, to
April. Temperature (°c), wind speed (m/sec), precipitate rain fall (mm) and
relative humidity (%) were pooled to obtain a mean value for each month and
year, at 2010 and 2011 growing seasons.

Statistical analysis:
All experiments were performed twice. Analyses of variance were
out using MSTAT-C difference between treatments at \( p < 0.05 \) (Gomez and

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

None of the used bread wheat cultivars showed any resistant reaction
against the pathogen in both experimental seasons.

First symptoms of powdery mildew in 2010 season were evident at the
first half of February in plants with phenological growth stages between 20
and 30 according to the scale based of Zadoks et al., (1974). All the tested
cultivars had variable levels of powdery mildew, since the mildew severities
ranged from 2 on Sakha-93 to 20% on Gemmeiza-10. During the 2010
season, severe infections of \textit{Blumeria graminis} were recorded in the
experimental cultivars, with percentages of leaves covered with mycelia often
above 50% (Table 1 and Fig. 3). The mean percentage of powdery mildew on
flag leaf (F) and the first leaf below the flag leaf (F1) ranged from 35% (Gemmeiza-7) to 87% (Gemmeiza-10). The cultivars Sakha-93 and Giza-160 were intermediate since they scored 45% and 62% disease severity, respectively. While in 2011 season, it could be noticed that powdery mildew disease severity was very late and low compared with 2010 season since disease severity ranged from 6% on Sakha-93, 8% on Gemmeiza-7, 12% on Giza-160 and 15% on Gemmeiza-10. This fluctuation in powdery mildew infection might be related to the differences in weather conditions in the two seasons. Tomas and Solis (2000) found a large variation in disease severity of the cultivars in the field, ranging from 0 to 70%, with different values in each repetition of the same place due to the spatial irregularity of the inoculum. Briceno-Flix et al. (2004) evaluated 5 Spain wheat cultivar against powdery mildew disease.

Table 1: Powdery mildew severity% (% leaf area covered by mycelia) and area under disease progress curve (AUDPC) of four bread wheat cultivars under artificial inoculation in 2010 and 2011 growing seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivars</th>
<th>Disease severity</th>
<th>AUDPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-10</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-7</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakha-93</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giza-160</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD at 5%</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3: Illustrate severe infection of powdery mildew on experimental plants in 2010 growing season.
They found that disease severity varied either between cultivars or between the three upper leaves. Disease severity at Zadoks growth stage 76 varied from 6.0 to 82.0 % on flag leaf (F), 12.0 to 87.3 % on flage-1 and 25.3 to 90.0 % on flage-2 among the tested cultivars. The wheat cultivars Anza and Adalid were the most susceptible ones.

Area under disease progress curve (AUDPC) for the tested four cultivars was proportional with disease severity in 2010 or 2011 seasons. (Table 1 and fig. 4). The cultivar ranking in descending order was Gemmeiza-10 (1635, 315) followed by Giza-160 (1160,270), Gemmeiza-7(850, 160), and Sakha-93 (635,110) in the two seasons respectively based on AUDPC. Wang et al. (2005) showed that according to the AUDPC, maximum disease severity on the penultimate leaf, and the disease index are good indicators of the degree of adult plant resistance (APR) in the field. Carver and Ellis Griffiths (2008) found that the correlation between total yield of primary shoots and area under the mildew curve was high (r = 0.953).

**Fig. 4 (A&B): Powdery mildew disease severity% and area under disease progress curve(AUDPC) on four bread wheat cultivars during 2010 and 2011 growing seasons.**
Relationship between powdery mildew severity and environmental conditions:

Highly significant differences were found between the response of the tested cultivars in powdery mildew infection. The tested cultivars showed high powdery mildew disease severity in 2010 season than in 2011 season. This could be attributed to the differences in weather factors in the two seasons.

Data in Table 2 show meteorological factors prevalent from January to April, 2010 and 2011. The values of air temp. av. (°C), and wind speed (m/ sec) in 2010 season were more than those in 2011 and this may be play an important role in dispersal of conidia of the pathogen between wheat plants than the other factors. Jarvis et al. (2002) stated that the optimal temperature for infection is around 15 –20 °C, but infection can take place between 5-30°C. High humidity (85-100% RH) also favors spore germination but does not affect mycelium development. Powdery mildew spores are short lived, prefer high humidity but do not tolerate immersion in water. Te Beest et al., (2008) identified the key weather factors determining the occurrence and severity of powdery mildew epidemics on winter wheat. They used disease data from field experiments at 12 locations in the UK covering the period from 1994 to 2002 with matching data from weather stations within a 5 km range. Wind in December to February under the Egyptian conditions was the most influential factor for a damaging epidemic of powdery mildew. Disease severity was best identified by a model with temperature, humidity, and rain in April to June. Wiik and Ewaldz (2009) reported that weather factors in the preceding growing season influenced powdery mildew and brown rust. Mild winters and springs favored the biotrophs such as powdery mildew, brown rust and yellow rust.

Table. 2. Meteorological factors prevailed in important months to powdery mildew infection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Precipitate Rain fall (mm)</th>
<th>HC air temp. av.(°C)</th>
<th>Relative humidity (%)</th>
<th>Wind speed (m/sec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>16.06</td>
<td>14.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>13.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>14.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>33.16</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>21.11</td>
<td>15.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yield reduction.

Data in Tables (3 & 4) reveal that The loss in yield components was correlated with disease severity in 2010 and 2011 seasons. In 2010 season, significant differences were found either between protected or non-protected plots of cultivars and between cultivars in relation to yield components, 1000 grain weight and Grain yield/ m². The highest reductions % in yield components were detected in Gemmeiza-10 wheat cv. i.e. 1000 grain weight (16.72 %) and grain yield/ m²(17.73 %), respectively ( Table 3 ).
In 2011 season, low values of yield losses were detected compared with 2010 season. The loss in 1000 grain weight ranged from 0.17 to 0.47, while grain yield/ m² ranged from 0.27 to 1.28% (Table 4). Bowen et al. (1991) demonstrated that early season powdery mildew can affect yield by reducing the number of tillers that a plant produces or the number of kernels per head. Griffey et al. (1993) stated that the susceptible cultivar Saluda had an average mean mildew severity (MMS) of 5.3%. MMS and grain yield for Saluda were significantly negatively correlated in both years, and yield loss averaged 13.4% in untreated plots relative to full-season control plots. Patrick E. Lipps. (1996) stated that losses up to 45 percent have been documented in Ohio on susceptible varieties when plants were infected in April and weather conditions were favorable for spread of the fungus throughout the growing season. Tomas and Solis (2000) found that the yield and powdery mildew severity results of each plot collected in Jerez de la Frontera showed a high uniformity in three repetitions data and a negative correlation between the average yield for each cultivar and its powdery mildew severity ($r = -0.580$).

**Table (3): Effect of Powdery mildew (Blumeria graminis) infection on percentage yield reduction of four bread Wheat cultivars in 2010 growing season.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Disease severity %</th>
<th>1000 grain weight (gm.)</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
<th>Grain yield/ m² (Kg.)</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-7</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>37.733</td>
<td>1.780</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>34.113</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-10</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>34.073</td>
<td>1.613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>28.373</td>
<td>16.72</td>
<td>1.327</td>
<td>17.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakha-93</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>37.770</td>
<td>1.537</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>34.092</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>1.360</td>
<td>11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giza-160</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>31.203</td>
<td>1.780</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>26.893</td>
<td>13.81</td>
<td>1.490</td>
<td>16.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.S.D. at 0.05%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.238</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table (4): Effect of Powdery mildew (Blumeria graminis) infection on percentage yield reduction of four bread Wheat cultivars in 2011 growing season.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Disease severity %</th>
<th>1000 grain weight (gm.)</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
<th>Grain yield/m² (Kg.)</th>
<th>Loss %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-7</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>40.660</td>
<td>1.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>40.590</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemmeiza-10</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>33.923</td>
<td>1.864</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>33.670</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakha-93</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>38.263</td>
<td>1.760</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>38.197</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giza-160</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>32.477</td>
<td>1.650</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>32.343</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.640</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.S.D. at 0.05%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


