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Rusty-leaf Mistletoe (*Scurrula ferruginea*), a Parasitic Plant on Cocoa and Its Management

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*The mistletoe (*Scurrula ferruginea*), a parasitic plant is quite widespread in Malaysia.*

*A severe infestation of *S. ferruginea* was reported on mature hybrid cocoa (9-12-year-old plantings) in a cocoa estate near Merlimau, Malacca in the 1980s. The effect on crop yield was not known, but the vigour, yield and photosynthetic capability had been greatly reduced. The control measures included: (i) removal of infected trees or their infected branches by pruning or poisoning. and (ii) chemical treatments designed to kill the endophytic system. A total of 588 hectares were pruned manually to remove the mistletoes in the cocoa estate near Merlimau, in May/June 1989. The average cost of pruning was estimated at RM34.50 per hectare. In a poisoning trial using six herbicides (fluroxypyr, triclopyr, dicamba, paraquat, glufosinate-ammonium and 2,4,5-T) the costs were as high as pruning. Manual pruning was therefore the recommended method of controlling cocoa mistletoe. Integrated Weed Management is perhaps the next step towards more effective and more efficient control of mistletoes over very large areas inclusive of cocoa estates, orchards and other agricultural/non-agricultural areas.*

Keywords: *Scurrula ferruginea, mistletoe, parasitic plant cocoa, management.*

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