

**EFFECT OF *Lantana camara* LEAVES ON CUT TUBER DECAY OF POTATO
USED AS SEED MATERIAL IN THE DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

*Potato is one of the profitable cash crops in Sri Lanka. Nearly half the cost of cultivation is accounted for seed tuber. Explore the possibility of using cut tubers, as seed material is an effective mean to reduce the seed cost. Tuber decay caused by the soil microorganisms is the major problem in using the cut tubers as planting material. Among the different treatments carried out to prevent the decay of cut tubers caused by microorganisms *Lantana camara* leaves were found to have significant effect in controlling tuber decay, expressed in terms of germination of cut tubers ($P < 0.05$). The cut tubers treated with *Lantana camara* leave significantly reduced the tuber decay over the rest of the cut tuber treatments. The growth and development of the plants produced from cut tubers were almost similar to that produced from whole tubers. The yields produced by plants from whole tubers and cut tubers treated with *Lantana camara* leaves did not differ significantly. It has been estimated that the use of cut tubers as planting material reduced the seed cost by 18.7%.*

Key words: cut tubers, *Lantana camara*, potato,