

Jember (Indonesia), May 7, 2023

Dear Prof. Dr. Tariq Mukhtar,
Editor-In-Chief Pakistan Journal of Phytopathology,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. I am writing to submit our manuscript entitled "The Effectiveness of *Piper betle* L. and *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss Leaves Extract in Controlling Damping-Off Diseases in Groundnut Plants" for consideration of publication in the esteemed Pakistan Journal of Phytopathology.

This study investigates the potential application of *Piper betle* L. (betel) and *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss (neem) leaf extracts as natural alternatives to synthetic fungicides for controlling damping-off disease caused by *Sclerotium rolfsii* in groundnut plants. Our research employs both in vitro and in vivo methods to evaluate the antifungal activity of the extracts against *S. rolfsii*. The results demonstrate that both betel and neem leaf extracts significantly inhibit the growth of *S. rolfsii*, with the highest inhibition percentage observed in the combined betel-neem extract treatment. Additionally, the in vivo suppression test revealed a considerable reduction in disease incidence when groundnut seeds were treated with the extracts.

Our findings contribute valuable knowledge to the field of phytopathology and offer an environmentally friendly alternative to synthetic fungicides for groundnut farmers in Indonesia and other countries. We believe that our research aligns well with the scope of the Pakistan Journal of Phytopathology, and that your readers will find it both informative and relevant.

We confirm that this manuscript is original, has not been published elsewhere, and is not under consideration for publication by another journal. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and are in agreement with its submission to the Pakistan Journal of Phytopathology. We also ensure that the necessary ethical approvals and relevant permissions have been obtained for the research conducted in this study.

We appreciate your time and consideration in evaluating our submission. We are looking forward to your valuable feedback and hope that our manuscript will be deemed suitable for publication in your esteemed journal.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ir. Rachmi Masnilah, M.Si.

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