ANTHRACNOSE: RESEARCH ON ITS CAUSING AGENT IN THE AVOCADO-PRODUCING AREA OF MICHOACAN, MEXICO

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Anthracnose has become one of the most important threats for avocado (*Persea americana* Mill) in the avocado-producing belt of Michoacan, Mexico. Former studies had identified *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* as the pathogen species causing this disease, with typical symptoms including circular or ellipsoidal dark, hidden lesions containing high amounts of salmon, orange, or pink compact masses of spores. In this research, 60 *Colletorichum* isolates from avocado fruit were collected in 22 areas of the avocado-producing area of Michoacán. These isolates were analyzed and characterized by using three different criteria: morphological comparisons, fungicide sensitivity, and molecular (DNA) approaches. Morphological studies, which included form and size of conidia, growth rate and color of colony, indicated presence of two pathogen species: *C. gloesporioides* and *C. acutatum*. Benomyl sensitivity tests proved positive for isolates formerly identified as *C. acutatum* by morphological analysis. Moreover, DNA analyses conducted for isolates identified as *C. gloesporioides* proved positive when a DNA sample was amplified with primer CgInt/ITS4 specific for this species, while those identified as *C. acuatum* proved positive when using primers CaInt-2/ITS4 specific for this species.