

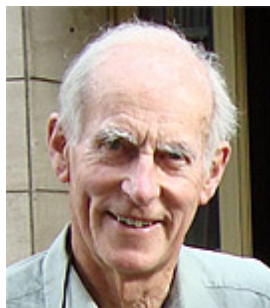
2010 : May - New Hot Papers : Chris Parker Talks About Work on Both Striga and Orobanche

New Hot Papers - 2010

May 2010



Chris Parker talks with *ScienceWatch.com* and answers a few questions about this month's New Hot Paper in the field of Agricultural Sciences.



Article Title: **Observations on the current status of Orobanche and Striga problems worldwide**

Authors: **Parker, C**

Journal: PEST MANAG SCI

Volume: 65

Issue: 5

Page: 453-459

Year: Sp. Iss. SI MAY 2009

* 5 Royal York Crescent, Bristol BS8 4JZ, Avon, England.

SW: Why do you think your paper is highly cited? Does it describe a new discovery, methodology, or synthesis of knowledge?

Parasitic weeds continue to be a major threat to crops in a range of ecologies, attracting widespread research efforts. Financial support for this research depends at least partly on evidence for its economic importance. Yet gathering such evidence itself is costly and fraught with difficulties.

This paper was commissioned to pull together what scattered statistics there have been on the subject and is thus the most up-to-date source available to authors needing to justify their work. It reviews available knowledge.

SW: Would you summarize the significance of your paper in layman's terms?

Parasitic weeds—witchweeds and broomrapes—attach to the roots of a wide range of tropical and subtropical crops, causing severe, sometimes complete, crop failure.

This paper demonstrates that, in spite of extensive research, crop losses continue to occur in the range of many million, if not billion, US dollars annually, contributing to poverty and malnutrition for millions of farmers, especially in Africa. The paper provides evidence for the need for continued funding for research.

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SW: How did you become involved in this research, and were there any problems along the way?

As a weed scientist, I was first familiar with *Striga* in South Africa in the 1950s and then became involved in UK-funded research on it in the UK from the 1960s onwards, gradually becoming specialized in the topic and thus becoming all too familiar with the difficulties of producing reliable, reproducible results, especially in the area of crop losses.

I have to say that I had never really intended to write this paper but was persuaded to do so by Professor Jonathan Gressel of the Weizmann Institute, Israel, when I planned to attend a workshop on the subject.

My past affiliations have been with the UK Weed Research Organization, Oxford, from 1967 to 1986 and with the Long Ashton Research Station, Bristol, from 1986 to 1990.

As a long time (20-year) retiree, I was expecting to be acting as an observer only, in my capacity as senior editor of the parasitic plants newsletter *Haustorium*.

"The work on both Striga and Orobanche has great social and economic significance for millions of small-scale farmers, particularly in Africa and the Middle East."

SW: Do you foresee any social or political implications for your research?

The work on both *Striga* and *Orobanche* has great social and economic significance for millions of small-scale farmers, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.


Chris Parker

Bristol, England

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KEYWORDS: Striga; Orobanche; crop losses; PARASITIC WEED OROBANCHE; BRANCHED BROOMRAPE; INFESTATION; POPULATIONS; CRENATA; HERMONTHICA; STEM BORERS; MANAGEMENT; RESISTANCE; FOETIDA.

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