

PUBLIC LECTURE

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Discovery of Hibiscus latent Singapore virus



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Hibiscus is an ornamental shrub that is native to warm temperate, subtropical and tropical regions throughout the world. It is first discovered in Hibiscus shrubs in Singapore. Its genome structure is similar to other tobamoviruses. We have purified the virus and determined the coat protein structure using x-ray fiber diffraction to 3.5Å resolution. To maintain the virus integrity, His-122 on its coat protein is found to contribute to its major structural stability. HLSV also contains an eight adenosine stretch located in its 5' genome that is responsible for the so-called programmed -1 ribosomal frameshifting. Plant viruses are similar to animal or human viruses in its genetic make-ups. There are a few plant viruses such as Papaya ringspot virus, Potato virus Y and Citrus tristeza virus which can cause severe damages to crop plants. As Singapore is developing urban agriculture, plant pathology becomes an important subject to train relevant manpower to understand how diseases are spread in the changing environment.

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