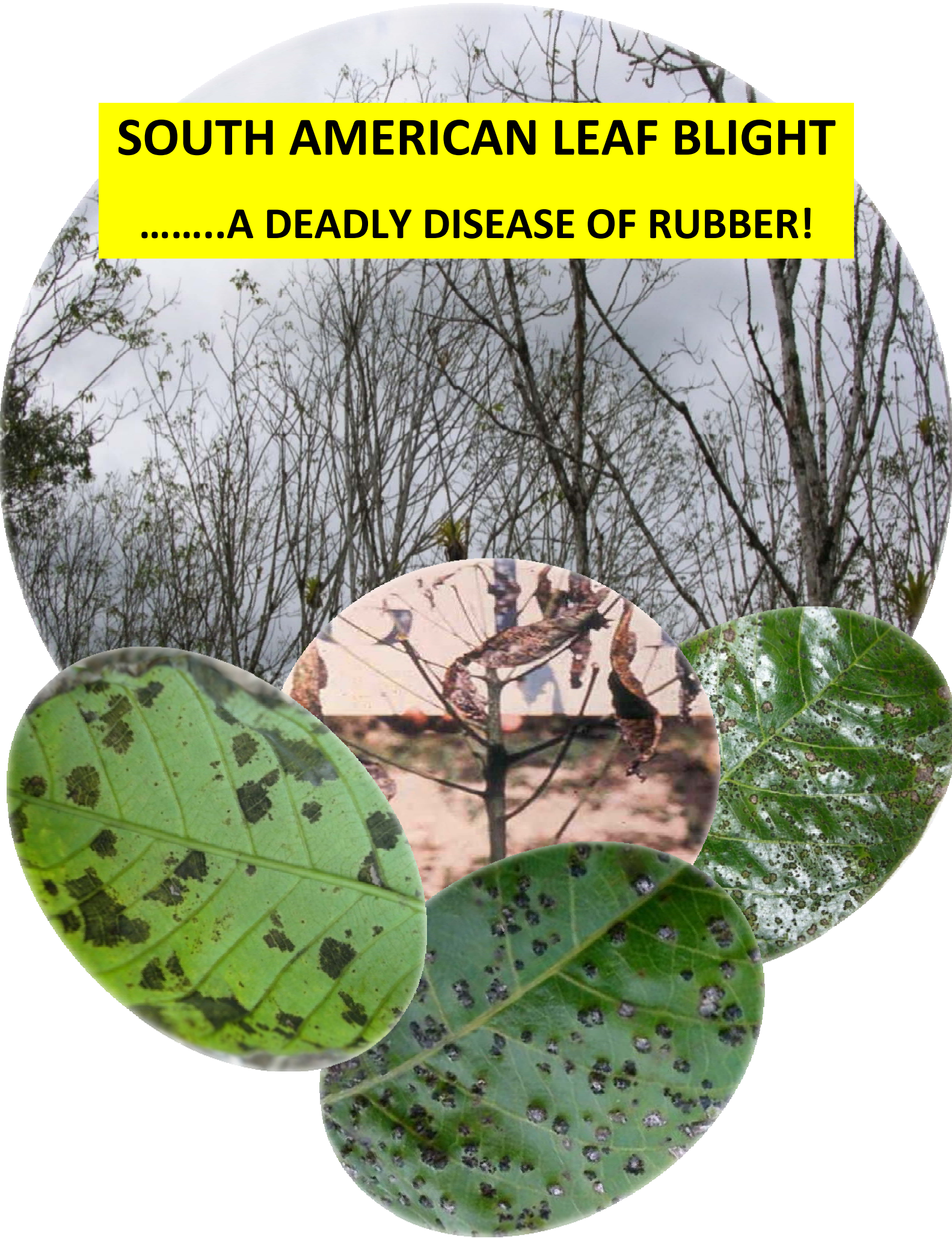


# **SOUTH AMERICAN LEAF BLIGHT**

**.....A DEADLY DISEASE OF RUBBER!**



## **Introduction**

Natural rubber is a valuable raw material used in more than 400,000 products for transportation, health care, household items, toys, etc. The rubber industry is economically important in many countries in Asia and Africa as the industry provides valuable export earnings and employment. The Asian rubber growing countries produce more than 90% of the world's natural rubber. In most countries, rubber is cultivated mainly by millions of small farmers. The rubber tree is also an important source of renewable timber that also contributes to the environment. This important industry is under threat from a deadly disease known as South American leaf blight (SALB) which is hindering the development of natural rubber growing industry in its region of origin (South America). At present, the disease is confined to South and Central America.

## **South American leaf blight (SALB)**

SALB is a leaf disease of rubber plant caused by a fungus called *Microcyclus ulei*. SALB can be recognized by its symptoms on young and mature leaves. The young leaves are deformed and numerous dark irregular lesions are present on the lower leaf surface. On mature leaves, prominent raised black bodies resembling warts occur on the upper leaf surface.

This disease will result in leaf defoliation, reduction in growth and yield and even death of infected plant. The fungus produced abundant spores on young and mature leaves. The spores which remained alive for sometimes are responsible for spreading the disease. The disease can be spread through movement of infected materials and contamination of travelers and their belongings.

## **Our responsibility to prevent the spread of SALB**

We can prevent the spread of this disease by taking appropriate precautionary measures:

1. Travelers who visited a rubber farm in Central and South America should take precautions to rid themselves and their belongings of living spores (taking bath and washing used clothing in transit countries)
2. Travelers should not bring home any parts of the rubber plants especially green leaves
3. Rubber planters should be vigilant of SALB and should contact relevant authorities e.g. Department of Agriculture or Rubber Research Institutes if SALB is suspected

For further enquiries, please contact:

(Contact point of each country)