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ABNORMAL POD PRODUCTION IN A BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL PLANT

In 1971 a plant belonging to the birdsfoot trefoil cultivar "Leo" was observed to be producing seed pods spontaneously, that is, without pollination. Further studies were conducted on this plant and the following additional observations were made:

1. Racemes usually contained six flowers, normal in all respects.
2. Some racemes produced no pods, some one pod, and about half produced five or six pods.
3. Pods usually developed for 2-3 weeks and then dropped off. The pods remained slender and obtained a maximum length of 2 to 2.5 cm.
4. When dropped, pods contained a row of embryonic seeds about 0.7 mm in diameter.
5. Occasionally (one pod per hundred) a swelling was observed in the pod. Such pods remained attached to the plant and brought usually, one or two seeds to maturity.
6. The plant produced a small percentage of seeds on being self pollinated. It was readily cross pollinated.
7. A dozen self seeds were germinated. These developed into normal plants. Some produced pods like the mother. A small proportion produced no pods.