

Banana freckle (Cavendish strain)

What is banana freckle?

Banana freckle is a disease of banana leaves and fruit. It is caused by the fungus *Phyllosticta cavendishii*. A strain of this fungus that infects Lady Finger and Bluggoe bananas occurs in Australia. The strain that infects Cavendish bananas (Cavendish strain) was detected in Northern Territory in 2013 and efforts are currently focussed on its eradication.



Typical freckle symptoms on Lady Finger banana leaf

Sharon Van Brunschot



Spread of freckle on a leaf, roughly concentrated on leaf veins

Kathy Girice

What do the symptoms look like?

The most characteristic symptom of freckle is a sandpaper feel to infected (spotted) leaves and fruit. This is caused by the fungal spore structures protruding through the surface of the leaf tissue or fruit peel.



Freckle spots concentrated on leaf veins

Kathy Grice



Freckle on dwarf Cavendish

Jeff Daniells



Freckle on Pisang Abu Nipah bunch in Malaysia

Juliane Henderson

What can it be confused with?

Banana freckle of Lady Finger and Bluggoe.

How do I distinguish Cavendish strain of banana freckle from the banana freckle strains already present in Australia?

The other strains of banana freckle do not infect Cavendish bananas. If you see any freckle like symptoms on Cavendish bananas report it immediately.

How is it spread?

The pest is spread by the movement of fungal spores on wet leaf surfaces. It can also be spread by contaminated fruit shipments.

Where is it now?

Cavendish strain of banana freckle has been reported in the Philippines and Taiwan. There are unconfirmed reports from India, Borneo and Java.

Freckle disease has been reported on Cavendish bananas in the Ord River production area of Western Australia but it has not been seen there for many years. In 2013 it was defeated in the Northern Territory and efforts are currently focussed on its eradication.

How can I protect my farm from banana freckle?

Check your farm frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common banana pests, so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**