

# Banana freckle (Cavendish race)

EXOTIC PEST – CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE IF SUSPECTED

## What is banana freckle?

Banana freckle is a disease of banana leaves and fruit caused by the fungus *Phyllosticta cavendishii*.

A different species *P. maculata* as well as *P. cavendishii*, a non-Cavendish infecting race, is found in Australia and can infect Lady Finger and Bluggoe (non-Cavendish cultivars) bananas. The race that infects Cavendish bananas (*P. cavendishii*) was previously detected in the Northern Territory (NT) but is not considered established in Australia.



Typical freckle systems on Lady Finger banana leaf

Source: Sharon Van Brunshot



Spread of freckle on a leaf, concentrated around the leaf veins

Source: Kathy Grice

## What do the symptoms look like?

The most characteristic symptom of freckle are dark raised spots and 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. On fruit, individual spots first appear as minute, reddish-brown flecks surrounded by a halo of dark-green, water-soaked tissue.

## What can it be confused with?

Banana freckle of Lady Finger and Bluggoe.

## How do I distinguish the Cavendish race of banana freckle from the banana freckle races already in Australia?

The other races of banana freckle do not infect Cavendish bananas. If you see any freckle like symptoms on Cavendish bananas report it to the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881** 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.



Freckle spots concentrated on leaf veins

Source: Kathy Grice



Freckle on dwarf Cavendish

Source: Jeff Daniels



Freckle on Pisang Abu Nipah bunch in Malaysia

Source: Juliane Henderson

### Where is it now?

Banana freckle has been recorded in 27 countries across South-east Asia, Oceania and India.

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, banana freckle was detected in the NT and after a successful eradication program, the NT and Australia was declared free of *P. cavendishii* on Cavendish.

More recently, *P. cavendishii* was reported on Christmas Island (external territory) and was not eradicated.

### 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**.

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**1800 084 881**

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