

Fact sheet

Trunk canker

What is Trunk canker?

Trunk canker is caused by several species of *Phytophthora*, only some of which are widely distributed. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is responsible for the disease in Australia. *P. menzei* is a serious canker pathogen on avocado in California and Mexico and is not present in Australia.

What does it look like?

Unlike cankers caused by *P. cinnamomi*, which are usually confined to the lower trunk, *P. menzei* invades the large structural roots, the trunk and may extend into the lower limbs. The bark may be discoloured, cracked or fissured at or below ground level and symptoms may extend as far as 3 metres up the trunk and branches. It can also invade avocado fruit.

What can it be confused with?

Symptoms of *P. menzei* resemble those caused by *P. cinnamomi*, however, a major difference is that symptoms of *P. menzei* spread further up the trunk and into lower branches.

What should I look for?

Look for cankers extending into lower branches, defoliation and twig dieback. Accurate identification of the pathogen is essential.

How does it spread?

P. menzei is a soilborne pathogen. It is spread in surface water, infested soil and infected nursery plants.



Ken Pegg, DEEDI

Symptoms of stem canker caused by *P. cinnamomi*



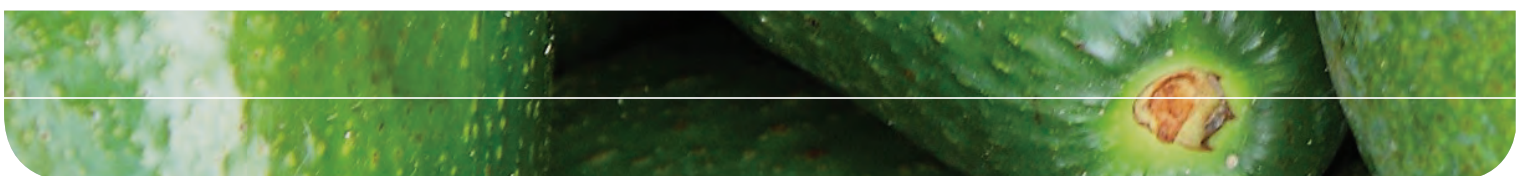
John Menge, University of California

External symptoms caused by *P. menzei* – note the sugary material exudate as a viscous liquid



John Menge, University of California

Canker caused by *P. menzei* with a brown necrotic lesion on the inner bark





Where is it now?

Trunk canker disease caused by *Phytophthora menzei* has limited distribution and is only found in California and Mexico.

How can I protect my orchard from Trunk canker?

Source plant material only from clean, accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Avoid flooding, drought and salinity as these stresses predispose trees to infection. Do not wet trunks from sprinkler systems. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common avocado diseases so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline



(Left) Basal bark cracking. (Right) Canker caused by *P. menzei* extending into lower branches and trunk

Randy Floetz, University of Florida

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