



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Banana burrowing nematode (257)



Photo 1. "Toppling" is a common symptom on banana when roots are attacked by *Radopholus*. Note this banana has fallen over before the fruits have matured; a sign of nematode attack. A similar symptom occurs when bananas are infected by the nematode *Pratylenchus coffeae*.



Photo 1. Progressive development of root rot symptoms (from left to right) by the burrowing nematode, *Radopholus similis*, in banana roots.



Photo 2. Burrowing nematode, *Radopholus similis*, showing the spear in the mouth (arrowed).

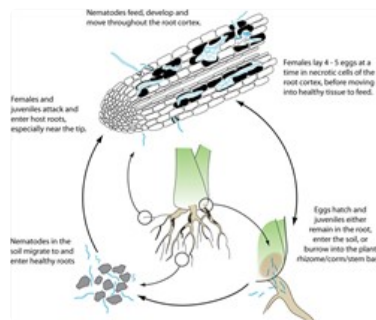


Diagram. Life cycle of the burrowing nematode, *Radopholus similis*, on banana.

Summary

- Worldwide. In tropics and sub-tropics. Root decay (red and black patches when split); weak bunches; and "toppling". Many crops and weeds. A important pest.
- Eggs are laid in roots or in soil nearby; larvae and adults tunnel through roots using a hollow spear to suck cell contents, and kill the roots.
- Spread is in ground water, and infested suckers.
- Cultural control: use non-host break crop (e.g., cassava, sweetpotato or a ground legume); before planting suckers: (i) remove soil and roots, inspect, cut out corm rots with knife wiped with bleach; (ii) treat with hot water - 53°C for 20 min.
- Chemical control: not recommended.

Common Name

Banana burrowing nematode, black head disease of banana

Scientific Name

Radopholus similis

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Information (and Diagram) from Brooks FE (2008) Barrowing nematode. The Plant Health Instructor. DOI: 10.1094/PHI-I-2008-1020-01. Updated 2014; and from Hauser S, Coyne D (2010) A hot bath cleans all: Boiling water treatment of banana and plantain. (<https://www.ctc-n.org/sites/www.ctc-n.org/files/resources/4ea6bfcd-2658-4dae-bf31-03861661b3dc.pdf>). Photos 1-3 Fred Brooks, Plant and Environmental Protection Services, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu.

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