



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Betel nut disease (067)



Photo 1. Spots are first noticeable on the youngest sixth or seventh leaf.



Photo 2. Thin red lines of rot occur from the top of the palm to the soil.



Photo 3. Close-up of the lines of red rot.



Photo 4. Internal rots extend through the vascular system to the pith.



Photo 5. Leaf production ceases and young leaves are seen as a fan partially exposed at the "throat" of the palm.



Photo 6. Unexposed parts of the shoot show large areas of decay with cavities filled with gum.



Photo 7. At an advanced stage of the disease, buds rot.

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Only known from Solomon Islands (from Reef Islands). On betel nut. An important disease of unknown cause.
- Yellow spots, up to 2 cm wide, starting on leaves 6 or 7; long red vertical lines of rot, 1-2 cm wide, on the trunks, narrowing to the growing point, where cavities are filled with gum. Flowers and buds rot. Palms die, mostly before they produce fruit.
- Molecular tests have shown presence of *Coconut cadang-cadang viroid*-related nucleic acids, but not known if these are the cause of the disease.
- Cultural and chemical control: none can be suggested until the cause of the disease is known.

Common Name

Betel nut decay. There is no common name; this disease occurs only in Reef Islands, Solomon Islands, and has been recorded only since the 1970s. It has not been reported elsewhere in Solomon Islands, or in other parts of the Pacific.

Scientific Name

None. The cause is unknown.

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Produced with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research under project PC/2010/090: *Strengthening integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production*, implemented by the University of Queensland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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