



## Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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### Cocoa sunscald & cherelle wilt (137)



Photo 1. Branch dieback and yellowing of the leaves due to sunscald of cocoa caused by exposure - lack of shade - and poor nutrition.



Photo 2. Severe branch dieback due to lack of shade and adequate nutrition.



Photo 3. Healthy young pods, or cherelles, before wilting.



Photo 4. Cherelles or young cocoa pods have "wilted" naturally, died, and blackened due to infection by fungi and other decay-causing organisms.

#### Summary

- Worldwide distribution. Natural processes occurring on cocoa, not diseases.
- Sunscald – Either cocoa is grown without shade, or shade is removed and soil nutrients not sufficient to support healthy growth. Top leaves yellow, fall, and young stems dieback. Lower shoots develop.
- Cherelle wilt – Young pods, 6-8 cm, first red or green, stop growing, lose colour and decay, turning black, but remaining attached. Although a natural process, it can be increased by *Phytophthora* black pod rot.
- Cultural control: important factors are: spacing; a light shade preferably from a tree in the legume family, moist soils (not too wet or dry); mulch; control of black pod.
- Chemical control: none recommended.

#### Common Name

Cocoa sunscald & cherelle wilt

#### Scientific Name

There is no scientific name for these as they are physiological conditions: (i) reaction of trees to lack of shade, and sun damage, and (ii) early death of cherelles, the young pods, by a natural fruit-thinning process.

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Information (and Photos 3&4) from Gerlach WWP (1988) *Plant diseases of Western Samoa*. Samoan German Crop Protection Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Germany. Photo 1 Pita Tikai, ACIAR/ICM/IPM project, Solomon Islands.

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