



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Coconut false smut (311)



Photo 1. Pustules of false smut, *Graphiola cocoina*, breaking through the surface of a coconut leaf.



Photo 2. Pustules of coconut false smut, *Graphiola cocoina*, that produce spores of the fungus.

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On coconuts, date palms, ornamental palms. A minor fungal disease. Unlikely to affect yield of coconuts or date palms; however, possibly a "cosmetic" disease on palms grown for landscaping, or a problem in the nursery.
- It is not a smut disease. Small, grey or black pustules, 1.5 mm diameter, emerge through the leaf, mainly on the top surface. Spores and sterile threads emerge from the pustules.
- Spread by spores in wind and rain.
- Cultural control: avoid over-crowding in coconut nurseries. Ideally, grow coconuts in polythene bags and space them at least 1 m apart; not economic to attempt to control the disease in the field - no evidence that it effects yield.
- Chemical control: if fungicides are required in the nursery, use copper products or mancozeb as protectants, or thiophanate methyl (sometimes formulated with chlorothalanyl) as a systemic product.

Common Name

Coconut false rust, coconut leaf smut

Scientific Name

Graphiola cocoina. Another species, *Graphiola phoenicis* is also present in the Pacific islands, in Fiji and Samoa.

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Photos 1&2 (taken by Eric McKenzie), and used in this fact sheet, appeared previously in McKenzie E (2013) *Graphiola cocoina* PaDIL - (<http://www.padil.gov.au>).

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