



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

<https://apps.lucidcentral.org/ppp/>

### Taro corm rots - post-harvest (179)



Photo 1. The dry white crumbly rot at the bottom of the corm is caused by *Pythium splendens*. The pinkish tissues above and slightly to the right are a reaction to infection by the corm tissues. The white semi-circle on the left is the cottony growth of *Athelia rolfsii*.



Photo 2. Light brown firm rot caused by *Phytophthora colocasiae*. The rot on the lower left side is caused by *Athelia rolfsii*. The corm has been incubated at high humidity overnight to stimulate the growth of the fungus.

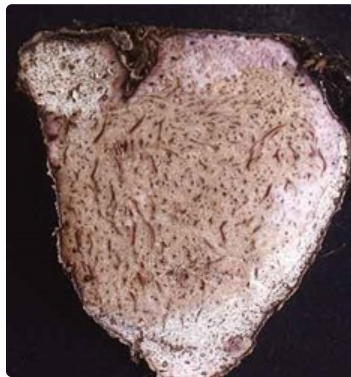


Photo 3. Light brown firm rot in a taro corm caused by *Phytophthora colocasiae*, after about 8 days.



Photo 4. Black spongy rot caused by *Lasiodiplodia theobromae*. These rots usually follow those of *Pythium* and *Phytophthora*, or they come in later after the corms have started to lose moisture.

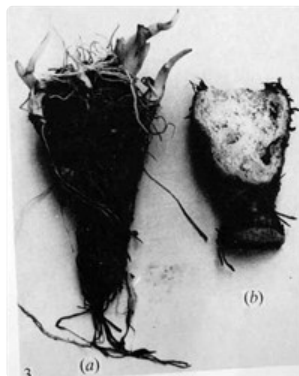


Photo 5. These two corms have been in a plastic bag for 4 weeks; the one on the left is still healthy whereas the one on the right has been destroyed by the soft rot bacterium, *Erwinia chrysanthemi*.

### Summary

- Worldwide in the tropics, on many crops. Important diseases.
- Fungi, water moulds (oomycetes) and bacteria cause the rots. They enter corms at harvest when suckers are broken off. The common ones are: (i) *Athelia* – pink with white border; (ii) *Pythium* - white crumbly rot; (iii) *Phytophthora* taro leaf blight - firm brown rot; (iv) *Lasiodiplodia* - black, spongy, sour-smelling rot; and (v) *Erwinia* - soft rot.
- Cultural control: harvest, remove suckers and soil, and store in (i) leaf-lined soil pit, or (ii) plastic bags or (iii) plastic-lined cardboard boxes, if for markets.
- Chemical control: improve storage in plastic bags by first dipping corms in bleach (1% for 1-2 mins).

## Common Name

Taro corm rots (post-harvest)

## Scientific Name

The following are the commonly recorded rots that develop in taro corms after harvest:

*Athelia rolfsii* (see **Fact Sheet no. 11**)

*Lasiodiplodia (Botryodiplodia) theobromae*

*Pythium splendens*

*Phytophthora colocasiae* (see **Fact Sheet no. 14**)

*Erwinia* species: *Erwinia carotovora* subsp. *carotovora* (see **Fact Sheet nos. 101, 214, 296**), and *Erwinia chrysanthemi*.

---

AUTHOR Grahame Jackson

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.

---

This mini fact sheet is a part of the app *Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds*

The mobile application is available from the Google Play Store and Apple iTunes.

