

## Cocoa sunscald & cherelle wilt (137)

### 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. 'Cherelles' are young pods that wilt during the first 6-8 weeks after pollination, when less than 10 cm long.

### Scientific Name

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



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



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.

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Information from (including Photos 3&4) 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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