# Pacific Pests, Pathogens and Weeds - Online edition

## Sweetpotato scab (013)

### Summary


- Worldwide distribution. On sweetpotato. A common, and sometimes serious fungal disease.
- Worse in wet weather.
- Young leaves infected early, especially along veins causing them to distort as they expand.
- Spread is by water splash, wind-driven rain, and on planting material.
- Cultural control: tolerant varieties, which exist in most countries. If susceptible varieties are needed, grow cuttings from sweetpotato storage roots, in a nursery far from production areas.
- Chemical control: mancozeb when symptoms first occur, but likely to be uneconomic.


### Common Name

Sweetpotato scab

### Scientific Name

*Elsinoe batatas*, but sometimes known as *Sphaceloma batatas* (the asexual stage). Usually, only the asexual state is seen on the leaves.


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Information from Jackson G, McKenzie E (1991) Pest Advisory Leaflet 24. South Pacific Commission, Noumea, New Caledonia. (https://lrd.spc.int/component/docman/cat_view/137-all/128-plant-health-/276-pest-advisory-leaflets?start=40); and from Ekman J, Lovatt J (2015) Pests, Diseases and Disorders of Sweetpotato: A Field Identification Guide. (https://www.soilwealth.com.au/imagesDB/news/Sweet-Potato-Pest-and-Disease-Guide.pdf). Photo 2 John Bokosou, NARI, Papua New Guinea.

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Photo 1. Distorted, torn leaves showing the brown scabby areas along the veins and leaf stalks caused by *Elsinoe batatas*. These are the places where the spores are produced.

Photo 2. Twisted, deformed leaves showing the undersurfaces and the brown scabby areas of *Elsinoe batatas*. Many of the scabs are on the leaf veins and petioles.

Photo 3. Twisted leaves of sweetpotato exposing the undersides, due to infection by the scab fungus, *Elsinoe batatas*.