Pacific Pests, Pathogens, Weeds & Pesticides - Online edition

Banana aphid (103)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On banana and plantains, and relatives, e.g., *Heliconia*.. Also, on *Canna*, ginger species, and aroids.
- Damage is done by the aphid spreading *Banana bunchy top virus*, after 18 hours' feeding. Once aphid is infected, it stays infected until death.
- Natural enemies: beetles, lacewings, syrphids, parasitoid wasps.
- Cultural control: weed – remove alternate hosts; prune mats of unwanted suckers; plantains are tolerant, and Gros Michel is more tolerant than Dwarf Cavendish.
- Chemical control: if plant has BBTV, remove old leaves, then kill aphids by (i) soap, white or horticultural oils; (ii) derris or pyrethrum; (iii) synthetic pyrethroids; or (v) kerosene or diesel. Spray glyphosate, and after 1 week, remove plant and burn.

Common Name

Banana aphid

Scientific Name

Pentalonia nigronerversa

Photo 1. Colony of banana aphids, *Pentalonia nigronervosa*. Note the dark colour of the adults and the nymphs. The dark veins of the winged adults can just be seen on the insect at the top left corner.

Photo 2. Banana of different ages showing symptoms of *Banana bunchy top virus* disease. Notice the stunted plants and the yellow leaves, which are pale yellow at the margins.

Photo 3. Banana plant with *Banana bunchy top virus*. Notice the leaves are upright, stunted and tend to cluster in the 'throat' of the plant; leaves like these are said to be 'choked' and typical of the disease.

Photo 4. Underside of a banana leaf showing the dark and light - dots and dashes - along the veins. Also, the veins near the midrib bend down, 'hooking' into it. These are characteristics symptoms of *Banana bunchy top virus*.

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Information from Waterhouse DF, Norris KR (1987) *Pentalonia nigronervosa* Coquerel. *Biological Control Pacific Prospects*. Inkata Press; and DAF (2017) Banana aphid. Queensland Government. (https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/plants/fruit-vegetable/insect-pests/banana-aphid); and from CABI (2019) Pentalonia nigronervosa (banana aphid). Crop Protection Compendium. (https://www.cabi.org/cpc/datasheet/39598). Photo 2 Richard Markham, ACIAR, Canberra.

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