

Banana bacterial (*Erwinia*) wilt (214)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On banana, and many other crops and ornamentals. A minor disease of banana.
- On mature plants before fruit ripens; leaves wilt, die, and hang around the stem. Internal smelly rot. Rhizome rots also occur after planting and, later, at the base causing plants to fall over.
- Spread when suckers trimmed, and soil bacteria splashed into 'throat' when young or into wounds.
- Cultural control: choose only healthy suckers; disinfect knives (bleach); use only well decomposed manures; remove diseased plants; improve drainage.
- Chemical control: not appropriate for this disease.

Common Name

Banana wilt, *Erwinia* wilt. There does not seem to be any accepted common name for this disease. Bacterial heart rot (of banana) is also thought to be caused by *Erwinia* species.

Scientific Name

Erwinia carotovora ssp. *carotovora* (now renamed *Pectobacterium carotovorum* subsp. *carotovorum*), possibly in association with *Erwinia caryanthei*.

Note, *Pectobacterium carotovorum* subsp. *carotovorum* causes a basal stalk rot of Chinese cabbage (see **Fact Sheet no. 101**).

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Information from *Diseases of fruit crops in Australia* (2009), Editors, Tony Cooke, et al. CSIRO Publishing. Photos 1&2 Kohler F, et al. (1997) *Diseases of cultivated crops in Pacific Island countries*. South Pacific Commission. Pirie Printers Pty Limited, Canberra, Australia. Photo 3 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland, Australia.

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Photo 1. Wilt of banana, caused by *Erwinia* spp. Note the older leaves have collapsed and are hanging around the pseudostem.



Photo 2. A skirt of leaves forms around the pseudostem due to wilt caused by *Erwinia* spp.



Photo 2. Pseudostem (petiole bases) of banana showing central rot associated with banana wilt, *Erwinia* spp.

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