

Sugarcane Ramu stunt disease (279)

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Papua New Guinea. On sugarcane, wild relatives and grasses. A major disease.
- Cane thin, stunted, with short erect leaves, and green to yellow streaks of varying length. Some or all shoots may die, depending on susceptibility.
- Spread by a planthopper.
- Cultural control: in smallholder plots remove plants and burn; resistant varieties (main method).
- Chemical control: none recommended as uneconomic; synthetic pyrethroids used in times of epidemics (1986).

Common Name

Ramu stunt disease

Scientific Name

Sugarcane Ramu stunt disease. Initially, the cause of the disease was thought to be a virus; later, phytoplasmas were detected (related to sugarcane white leaf phytoplasmas) in diseased plants and also in planthoppers (*Eumetopina flavipes*), which may spread the disease. More recently, a virus has again been suggested. Advanced RNA sequencing techniques may have found a virus belonging to the Tenuivirus group.



Photo 1. Stunted plant (foreground) showing symptoms typical of Ramu stunt disease.



Photo 2. Leaves showing yellow streaks (2-5 mm wide) along the blade, typical of Ramu stunt disease on susceptible varieties of sugarcane.



Photo 4. Side view of *Eumetopina flavipes*, the planthopper that spreads Ramu stunt disease.



Photo 3. Above view of *Eumetopina flavipes*, the planthopper that spreads Ramu stunt disease.

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Information from Ramu stunt (2013) Sugar Research Australia. Information Sheet IS1 3090. (http://sugarresearch.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Ramu_stunt_IS13090.pdf); and from CABI (2015) Sugarcane Ramu stunt disease (Ramu stunt disease). Crop Protection Compendium (<https://www.cabi.org/cpc/datasheet/57173>). Photos 1&2 Braithwaite KS (2010) Ramu stunt. PaDIL - (<http://www.padil.gov.au>). Photos 3&4 Bellis G, Fletcher M (2011) Island Sugarcane Planthopper (*Eumetopina flavipes*). PaDIL - (<http://www.padil.gov.au>).

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