

Banana bract mosaic disease

What is banana bract mosaic disease?

Banana bract mosaic (BBrMV), also known as Kokkan, was first detected in the Philippines in 1979 and has subsequently been detected in India and Sri Lanka. This pathogen spreads very quickly and causes significant economic losses and can infect all varieties of banana.

BBrMV causes reduced bunch weights with fruit rejection in severe cases. In addition, a significant proportion of fruit are made unmarketable by the production of malformed bunches and underdeveloped fingers.

As the most distinctive symptom of this pest is the dark reddish-brown mosaic pattern seen on the flower bracts, it can be difficult to see in non-bunching field plants. Leaf and stem symptoms may be present and the virus has also been detected in symptomless plants.

What do the symptoms look like?

- Dark red-brown mosaic pattern on flower bracts.
- Green or red streaks or spindle-shaped lesions on leaf petioles and midribs of new leaves.
- Reddish-brown spindle-like streaks can also be seen on the stem when the dead outer leaves are removed.
- Chlorotic streaks may appear on bunch stems and fingers.
- Severe infection leads to fruit rejection.



Dark red-brown mosaic pattern on flower bracts

John Thomas

How is it spread?

BBrMV is transmitted non-persistently by at least three species of aphid, which acquire the virus during feeding on infected plants. The pest can also be transferred through planting material (e.g. using infected plants as a source of new planting material or for tissue culture). Rigorous testing of planting material is essential as BBrMV can be detected in symptomless plants.

There have been no reports of transmission of BBrMV on cutting tools or other equipment, and it is not known to be soil-borne.

Where is it now?

BBrMV has been recorded in the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka. There are additional records of BBrMV from Western Samoa and Vietnam, but these were from plants displaying atypical symptoms and its presence in these countries requires further investigation.

How can I protect my farm from banana bract mosaic virus?

Only use pest-free, tissue culture planting material.

Check your farm frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common banana pests, so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



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