

Biosecurity Advice

ALERT

Pest

Phyllosticta cavendishii (Banana freckle)

Date

01 June 2022

Location

Batchelor – Rum Jungle. Northern Territory (NT)

Current Situation

Banana freckle has been detected at a rural residential property in the Northern Territory's Top End. The NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade confirmed the sequencing results from an interstate laboratory yesterday afternoon. Banana freckle is a fungal disease of banana leaves and fruit. There is no risk to human health from eating affected bananas.

The *Phyllosticta cavendishii* (Banana freckle) strain of fungus was detected on Dwarf Cavendish bananas at the infected property in the Batchelor - Rum Jungle region. The banana plants have only been grown on the infected property for the past 3 years (after the eradication of banana freckle in the NT in 2019). Plant biosecurity officers are undertaking surveillance across the Top End to determine how widespread the pest is. They will follow strict biosecurity decontamination protocols when entering and exiting any premises to prevent the risk of spreading the disease.

Banana freckle is a 'wet spore' organism. It generally moves short distances by water droplet splashes and wind-driven rain. The pest is spread over larger distances by people moving infected fruit, leaves and suckers used for planting.

Banana freckle causes spotting on banana leaves and fruit. The signs include:

- A sandpaper-like texture on leaves and fruit. This is caused by the pest sticking up through the surface of the leaf or skin.
- Spotting may extend to the flower bracts, leaf midrib and bunch stalks.
- Fruit are infected, causing blemishes. This increases as the fruit matures.
- Large areas of the fruit's surface may become black due to dense spotting.



Source: NSW Government

The NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade's Plant Biosecurity team is working with industry to support a small number of nurseries, commercial growers and rural property owners to manage this pest.

The Northern Territory Government is also working with industry, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments through the national response arrangements. The national technical committee, the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests will meet on Friday 3 June 2022 to consider the detection to determine response actions.

More information is being provided at: <https://nt.gov.au/banana-freckle>

Identification information here: <https://pestid.com.au/>

All growers are encouraged to report any signs of banana freckle in host plants to the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881**. Instructions will be given on how to collect and submit samples for identification. Your cooperation will assist in delimiting the spread of this unwanted new pest species.

For further information email: john.mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au