

Trapping banana weevil

Recognize the problem

The banana weevil is a beetle pest which attacks the banana plant under or near the soil surface, particularly the stem bases and roots. The adult weevil is grey-brownish, just over 1 cm long, and has a prolonged snout.

Larvae feed and bore tunnels into rhizomes, stems, suckers and roots. The destruction lowers production as banana bunches will be underweight. Other symptoms are yellowing of leaves and the plants becoming stunted with hollow strips on the stems. In a severe attack, the plant falls over easily near ground level. Attacks occur throughout the year, but the plants suffer more during drought.

Background

The adult weevil lives 2 years or more. The weevils lay eggs in the upper part of the corm. The eggs develop into larvae which are ½ to 1 cm white legless grubs. The larvae attack the banana tree by boring the stem and roots. After 2 to 3 weeks, larvae become pupae and a week later, they grow into adults. Banana weevils are spread by planting materials from affected plantations and by contaminated working tools. They can also walk between banana trees, because they can smell them. For controlling the pest, scouting should be done twice a week. Look for adult weevils walking around the stem bases, and look for damage symptoms.

Management

- Trap the weevil using half split 30 cm long stems or cut stem discs
- Lay cut stems or discs around banana plants in the plantation with the cut part on the ground. Use 3 to 4 split stem pieces around each banana plant and set at least 10 of such traps per acre.
- The weevils will come out during the night and smell the split banana trap materials.
- They will walk to the traps and hide under them
- A farmer can pass through next morning, check the traps and hand-pick then crush the weevils

Adult banana weevil and larva.
(Photo by Queensland Government)



Stem damaged by banana weevil.
(Photo by A. M. Varela, icipe)



Scientific name(s) > *Cosmopolites sordidus*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Tanzania



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