

Banana Stem Weevil

Recognize the problem

The banana stem weevil attacks the plant during flowering and bunch formation stages and causes severe yield loss by preventing bunch development. The early symptom which indicates weevil and grub activity is the presence of jelly exudation on the banana stem. Due to feeding by grubs, the pseudostem becomes hollow and can even break at the apical region after a gush of wind. The grubs cause more damage by making long tunnels in the pseudostem. This results in yellowing and withering of leaves, exudation of sap from leaf sheaths, decaying of peduncles and immature ripening of fruits.

Background

The pest incidence is at its peak during summer and monsoon seasons. The attack usually starts about four months after planting, which coincides with the initiation of the peduncle in the growing plants.

Management

- Follow clean cultivation practices and in severe infestations, uproot and burn the plants
- Stem trapping- Cut old pseudostems into lengths of 20 to 60 cm and split each of these lengthways. Then, place on the ground near the corn bases with the cut surface downwards. Swab the cut surface of these traps with biocontrol agents like *Beauveria bassiana* (20 g rice chaffy grains formulation/ 3 ml in 100 ml of liquid formulation) or 15 ml of entomopathogenic nematode, *Heterorhabditis indica* at 1 billion infective juveniles (IJs) per ml. The volatiles from these stem traps attract weevils that will be killed while walking on the trap surface within or after 24 hrs
- Spray chlorpyrifos 20 EC 2.5 ml/litre + 1 ml wetting agent or azadirachtin (5 ml/litre) 2 or 3 times at 3 week intervals.
- If infestation is noticed after 7 months of planting, stem injection with systemic insecticide such as imidacloprid (0.2 ml in 500 ml water) is the only way to control the pest. Do not inject insecticide after flowering.
- Matocking should be avoided i.e. the plant should not be left after bunch harvest for recycling of nutrients in weevil endemic area.

Adult of Banana stem weevil.
(Photo by NBAII)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Odoiporus longicollis*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: India



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