FACTSHEETS FOR FARMERS

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Pruning to manage anthracnose on mango

Recognize the problem

Anthracnose is a major fungal disease of mango which can affect all parts of the tree including branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits. The disease presents a great challenge for those who are involved in the production of mangos for export. The disease is most severe during wet and warm conditions causing yield loss by attacking different parts of the plant. Attack to the flowers results in low fruit set while attack on the young fruit causes rot, deformation and premature fruit drop. Mature fruit affected by anthracnose may be malformed and mature fruits can also be affected post-harvest, reducing their quality and market value. Fungicides are available to prevent this disease but are expensive and may not always be effective. Phytosanitary pruning can help to reduce anthracnose damage on mangos.

Symptoms on leaves. (Photo by Scot Nelson, via Flickr)

Background

Spores of the fungus are produced on dead branches and leaves which then spread to the flowers and fruits by water. Pruning dead leaves and twigs and mummified fruits can help to reduce the inoculum in the field and minimise the disease. Pruning excessive branches also improves light penetration and air circulation to reduce humidity in the canopy and reduces fungal growth. Limiting the height of trees by pruning is also important to allow access for the removal of diseased fruits, flowers and branches.

Symptoms on flowers. (Photo by Scot Nelson, via Flickr)

Management

- Prune and remove mummified mango fruits annually, immediately after harvesting and before flowering
- Use appropriate equipment or tools such as secateurs, loppers, clippers and a saw. (Caution: avoid the use of tools such as cutlasses that can wound and split the branches, making the plant susceptible to infection)
- Remove all dead, overlapping or excessive branches and twigs, waterspouts and any branches showing symptoms of disease to reduce humidity, improve air circulation in the canopy and enhance light penetration
- For a sizeable branch, first make a cut on the underside and then another one on the upper surface, the lower cut should be shorter than the uppercut
- Collect all debris and burn outside of the field

Scientific name(s) **> *Glomerella cingulata***

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana

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