

TREE PEST OF THE MARIANAS

Adult beetles feeding on rotting banana stem



Photo by Donald Nafus

Common Name: Banana Weevil

Scientific Name: *Cosmopolites sordidus* (Germ.) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)

Biology: Eggs laid singly in small cavities in pseudostem near ground. The eggs are white, elongate-oval, about 2-3 mm long, and hatch in 5-8 days. The larvae are white, legless grubs with a brown head. They tunnel through the base of the stem or in the rhizome and take 2-3 weeks to develop. The white, 12mm-long pupa take about one week to develop into brown or black adults. The adult feeds on dead or dying banana plants and does not disperse readily. Adults can live up to 2 years.

Crops Affected: Banana, cocoa

Distribution: Present in Micronesia including the Marianas. Widely distributed throughout the tropics.

Damage: Weevil injures rhizomes by tunnelling through them. In cut rhizomes infested plants have tunnels filled with brown or black debris. Infested plants are weak. Growth is slow and bunch sizes are smaller. Heavily infested plants are more likely to blow down in storms. Susceptible plants or very young plants can be killed.

Control: Most infestations start by planting infested suckers as the adult beetles do not fly. Primary control is cultural. Plant clean rhizomes only. Remove pseudostem and all loose material on rhizome and clean thoroughly. Inspect rhizome and search for tunnels made by larvae. Dip clean rhizomes in 5% clorox solution and discard any infested rhizomes. Plant rhizome under impacted soil. Cut old stem off below ground level and cover with impacted soil. Cut up old stems so they dry rapidly. Consult your Cooperative Extension Service for chemical controls.

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