

A devastating disease of Cassava

Cassava Brown Streak Disease

Cassava brown streak is a devastating disease that causes loss of root production and quality. It affects both above ground plant parts and underground storage roots. It causes the tubers to become corky and inedible. Though for sometime it remained a problem of the low land areas of eastern and southern African countries, recently it has become more and more widespread in central and other parts of Uganda, Western Kenya and parts of Tanzania.

What causes cassava brown streak?

Cassava brown streak is caused by a virus. It is mainly spread through propagation of infected planting materials. Especially, movement of planting materials from place. It is also suspected that a vector known as whitefly may be responsible for its spread.

How to recognize cassava brown streak

Symptoms of brown streak appear on the leaves, stem and roots. The disease appears as patches of yellow areas mixed with normal green colour, which are more prominent on mature (lower) leaves. Unlike the case of cassava mosaic, the damaged leaves do not become distorted in shape (Fig A). It appears as brown "streaks" with dead spots on upper green portions of the stem (Fig. B). It distorts the shape of the storage roots/tubers and may cause cracks and discolouration - yellow-brown necrotic rot (Fig. C). The foliar symptoms of Cassava brown streak are less conspicuous and farmers are often unaware of the problem until the roots are harvested.

Leaf Symptoms

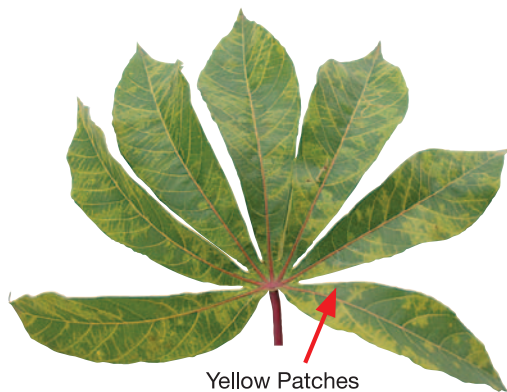


Fig A

Stem Symptoms

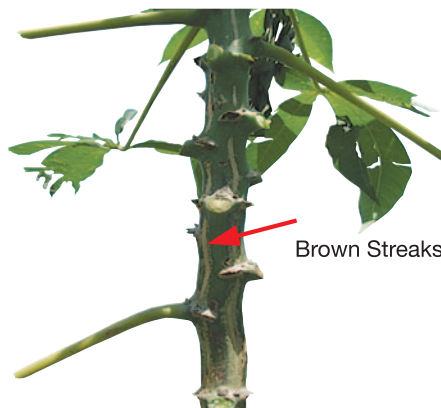


Fig B

Root Symptoms

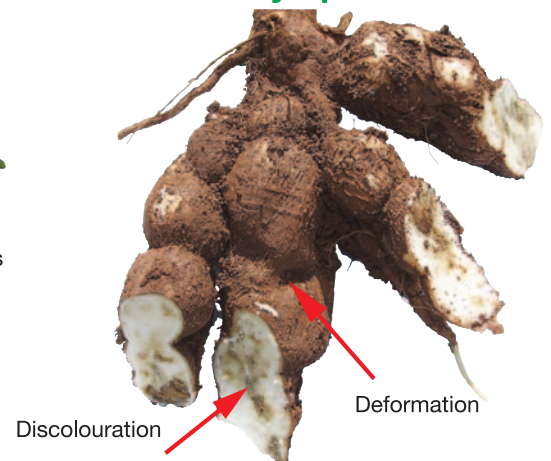


Fig C

How to control cassava brown streak

- Avoid the movement of infected planting materials from one place to another
- Select propagating materials from healthy and unaffected plants
- Use tolerant or resistant varieties where available
- Uproot and destroy infected plants
- Do not plant cassava close to infected cassava fields