

# Bunchy top is the most damaging disease of banana in the Mariana Islands.

## Key Facts

- ❖ Bunchy top disease is caused by the **Banana bunch top virus (BBTV)** and is spread by the banana aphid and infected planting materials (e.g. suckers, keiki).
- ❖ Banana plants can be infected for up to 4 months before symptoms appear.
- ❖ Once infected, the virus spreads to all parts of the banana mat through the corms and suckers.
- ❖ BBTV is a major disease in all banana-producing regions.
- ❖ There is no known cure. BBTV-infected plants cannot recover and should be removed to prevent further spread.
- ❖ BBTV infection can be confirmed by ELISA test.

## Contacts

### University of Guam

#### College of Natural and Applied Sciences

#### Extension & Outreach Services

Agriculture and Life Sciences Building

#### *Plant Disease Identification & Pest Management*

Dr. Andrea L. Blas ..... 735-2140 Rm 217

Dr. Bob Schlub ..... 735-2089 Rm 105E

Roger Brown ..... 735-2094 Rm 226

#### *Insect Identification & Pest Management*

Dr. Aubrey Moore ..... 735-2086 Rm 105H

### Guam Department of Agriculture

Main office ..... 300-7973

#### *Tissue Culture & Plant Nursery*

\*for disease-free planting materials

Rick Lizama ..... 482-5339

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# Banana Bunchy Top Disease

Managing Bunchy Top disease in your field or home garden.



## Common Symptoms



*Above:* Leaf veins develop a hooked appearance where they connect to the mid-rib.

*Below:* Morse-code, dot-and-dash pattern on BBTV-infected leaf.



*Right:* Bunchy top or choked collar of leaves. Leaves are narrow and shortened with yellow margins. *Below right:* Mottled or streaked appearance can extend to inflorescence if produced. *Below:* Adult banana aphid can transmit BBTV from infected plant to healthy plant.



## Control of Bunchy Top Disease based on 4 Steps

1. Remove sources of virus and banana aphid.

- Taro, ginger and heliconia are alternative hosts to the banana aphid and BBTV virus. Do not plant these near banana.

2. Control for aphids.

- Use insecticidal soaps or commercial insecticides to kill aphids. **Follow label instructions.** Spray only the whorl and upper part of the trunk.

3. Destroy infected plants.

- Make a hole in the trunk with a screwdriver or awl, then spray or pour concentrated glyphosate (or other herbicide) into the hole.

4. Remove diseased mat.

- After 6-8 weeks, the herbicide should kill all plants/plantlets through the underground connections. Dig out the dead plants and underground corm to avoid re-sprouting.

Re-plant only with disease-free planting materials.