

# Cocoa Pink Disease

Farmer  
Fact Sheet

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## What is it?

It is a disease caused by a fungus. It infects cocoa and other trees - *Agathis*, *Citrus*, *Cordia*, *Hibiscus*, mango and rubber. The scientific name is *Phanerochaete* (also known as *Corticium*).

## Damage

White threads of the fungus spread over the bark – the threads look like cobwebs. Later, white pustules appear through cracks and through the natural openings in the bark. Later still, a pink crust develops which produces spores. Spores of the fungus are spread by rain splash.

Branch dieback occurs and, occasionally, death of the tree if infections occur at the fork or jorquette. If management is poor, and there is a lot of shade, losses can be high, but usually the disease is not important. The disease is worse on trees between 2 and 6 years' old.



## How do I identify it?

Look for the sudden death of a branch, with the brown leaves remaining attached (photo, left). Look closely to see white threads of the fungus and the pink crust on the stems and trunk (photo, right). Regular surveys to detect infections are very important.

## How to manage cocoa pink disease

**CULTURAL CONTROL:** Prune out the infected branches as soon as the fungus is seen. If the fungus has infected the fork or jorquette, then consider a chemical treatment (see below);

- DO NOT leave the cut branches in the plantation; take them out and burn them;
- Prune only in dry weather. Cut at least 30 cm below any sign of the disease;
- DO NOT plant trees too close or under heavy shade.

**CHEMICAL CONTROL:** Copper fungicides are useful if applied as a paste in a little water. Prune the branches and apply the paste to the cut ends and along the remaining parts.

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