

Cassava Shoot Dieback

Farmer
Fact Sheet

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What is it?

A large insect bug causes the dieback. It has a long, needle-like mouth. It uses this to suck juices from stems and fruits. The scientific name is *Amblypelta*. This insect also causes premature nutfall on coconut, shoot dieback on Eucalyptus, and black spots on cocoa pods.

Damage

As the bug feeds, it injects a poison into the plant. Different plants develop different symptoms:

- On coconuts, the young fruits (or nuts) fall;
- On *Eucalyptus* and cassava, the shoots wilt and die, and dead woody areas called cankers develop on the stems (photo, left);
- On cocoa, the young pods (the cherelles) develop black sunken spots and become misshapen as they grow.



How do I identify it?

The bug has a pale green body, long legs, and pale brown wings (photo, right). The body is 20 mm long. Look for the very long needle-like mouth, almost as long as its body. The young bugs look like the adults, except they are smaller.

How to manage cassava shoot dieback

NATURAL ENEMIES

Natural control by ants occurs in Solomon Islands. *Wasmannia*, the fire ant from Papua New Guinea, controls the bug in coconuts. *Oecophylla*, the weaver ant, controls the bug in cocoa (and coconuts, if other ants are absent), so plant soursop between the rows of cocoa to attract them. Damage to cassava is usually quite low, so control measures are not worthwhile.

CHEMICAL CONTROL: Insecticides are not recommended for the control of this insect.

AUTHORS **Helen Tsatsia** • **Grahame Jackson**

HT works for MAL; GJ is with TerraCircle Inc.



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