

Preventing coffee wilt disease

Recognize the problem

Coffee wilt disease kills all types of coffee plants, of all ages. Coffee wilt disease starts as wilting, yellowing and curling of leaves on one side of the plant. Then that side of the plant loses leaves and the tree eventually dies. Seedling and young plants may die within a few months of infection. Remove a section of the bark "ngozi" on the lower stem near the ground. A diseased tree has a dark blue-black discolouration just underneath the bark. Healthy stems are yellowish green. Coffee wilt disease can also be identified from other wilt diseases by plants remaining firm in the ground, because the roots do not die.

Background

There is no chemical control for coffee wilt disease once the plant is infected. The disease is caused by a fungus living in the soil and dead infected plant materials. The fungus enters the plant through wounds on the stem and roots. The fungus grows inside the plant and blocks the movement of water up the plant. Without water, the leaves wilt.

Management

- When working around coffee plants, be careful not to wound the stems and roots of the plants
- Remove coffee plants as soon as they become diseased. Burn infected tree and roots on the spot to prevent spreading the disease
- Do not replant coffee in the same spot for 1 year
- Disinfect farm tools used for pruning and stumping with bleach. Mix a bottle of bleach with a bottle of water in a bucket and wash the tools
- Avoid moving infected plants into uninfected areas
- Ask your extension officer which resistant varieties are available in your area

Blue-black discolouration under the coffee bark.



Scientific name(s) > *Gibberella (Fusarium) xylarioides*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Kenya

Authors: Negussie Gurmessa, Lizz Johnson, Ashraf Poswal, Jayne Crozier
CABI
tel: (+254) 0724011127 email: e.negussie@cabi.org

Edited by Plantwise