Yabas leaf and rice gall midge

Recognize the problem
Yabas leaf is silvery white, tube-shaped, hollow and up to 90 centimetres long. Rice branches with yabas leaf do not grow a flower head. Once the rice plant has yabas leaf, new branches have smaller flower heads that mature unevenly, making the rice difficult to harvest.

Background
Yabas leaf is caused by an insect known as the African rice gall midge. The rice gall midge is a small reddish-brown insect. It looks like a mosquito. The gall midge lays eggs which hatch into worms or tumbus. The tumbu injects a poison into the rice plant which causes the yabas leaves. The plant produces swellings or galls along the leaf.

The gall midge attacks all stages of rice growth before the grain head starts to form. The gall midge also lives in wild grasses around rice fields. The gall midge is spread in seedlings which contain the tumbu.

Management
- Plant early in June or July. All the farmers in the area should plant at the same time to reduce gall midge attack.
- Use tolerant rice varieties such as ROK 24, available at the Rice Research Station, Rokupr and from established seed companies.
- Brush and remove weeds and rice stubbles during off-planting season.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Sierra Leone

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