

Prevention and control of banana nematodes

Banana root nematodes are microscopic worms that feed on plant roots, causing premature death hence reducing water and nutrient uptake.

Nematodes are identified by rooting of plant roots, falling of plants during strong winds, reduced bunch sizes. East African highland banana are susceptible to nematodes. The most damaging nematodes are *Radopholus similis*, *Helicotylenchus* spp, *Pratylenchus* spp.

Prevention

Use clean planting materials such as tissue cultured or macro propagated plants.

Pair suckers by removing all roots that could contain nematodes.

Treat suckers with hot water for 30 seconds to kill nematodes and their eggs but exceeding 30 seconds damage the sucker.

Cut and put tithonia plants in planting holes when planting to prevent early infestation and nutrient provision to plants.

Apply manure when planting to allow vigorous plant growth .

Control

Apply mulch as surface coverage to promote vigorous plant growth.

Use tolerant plant varieties such as FHIA 17 and 23.

Practice crop rotation with cassava and sweet potatoes to break disease life cycle.