Cordana leaf spot

Cordana leaf spot is a disease of banana that, even though it is common worldwide, has generally little impact on production. It is caused by two Neocordana fungi that are often found as secondary invaders of leaf lesions caused by other fungi.

Contents
- Causal agents
- Distribution
- Symptoms
- References

Causal agents

Two Neocordana species are responsible for Cordana leaf spot symptoms: Neocordana musae\(^1\), formerly Cordana musea\(^2\) and originally described as Scoletrichum musae\(^3\); and Neocordana johnstonii\(^1\), formerly Cordana johnstonii\(^4\), which causes a disease very similar in appearance.

Distribution

Cordana leaf spot caused by \( N. \) musae is found in banana plantations all over the tropics.

Cordana leaf spot caused by \( N. \) johnstonii was reported in Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, Norfolk Island, Lord Howe Island), Indonesia (Papua province), Malaysia (Cameron Highlands), Philippines and Tonga.

The observations from Australia indicate that \( N. \) johnstonii is better adapted to cooler climates. The species was found in herbarium samples of Cordana leaf spot collected in New South Wales starting in the 1930s, as well as on Lord Howe Island off the coast of New South Wales, and Norfolk Island (between Australia and New Zealand), whereas \( N. \) musae was found to be the cause of most Cordana leaf spot in Queensland and was also identified in the Northern Territory. The distribution of the two species overlaps in the southern part of Queensland, close to the border with New South Wales\(^5\).

Symptoms

The most characteristic symptoms of the disease are on the leaf. They are large, pale brown, oval to fusiform necrotic lesions with pale grey concentric ring patterns, with a dark brown border surrounded by a bright yellow halo separating the lesion from the healthy leaf tissue\(^6\). Often, lesions coalesce into large necrotic patches. The leaves ultimately turn brown and dry out.

The leaf spots caused by \( N. \) musae are larger and oval to elliptical in shape, while those caused by \( N. \) johnstonii are generally smaller and become more fusiform with age\(^5\).

Invasion often occurs at leaf margin in plants weakened by senescence, adverse environmental conditions, nutritional deficiencies, wounds or infections caused by other pathogens. Symptoms are often seen around lesions caused by other pathogens. When the infection is associated with other
diseases, e.g. with black leaf streak, the lesions are enlarged and become necrotic. This occurs especially under humid conditions.

References

2. Cordana musae (Zimm.) Hohnel. Zentralblatt für Bakteriologie und Parasitenkunde Abteilung, 2(60):7 (1923)

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