'Williams' is a cultivar of the Giant Cavendish type in the Cavendish subgroup. It is one of the most widely grown cultivars in commercial plantations.

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History, distribution and economic importance

'Williams' is believed to have first appeared as a tall mutant in a 'Chinese Cavendish' ('Dwarf Cavendish) plantation in Australia in 1910[1]. It soon started replacing 'Chinese Cavendish' and, by the 1950s, became the most widely grown cultivar in the country.

It was introduced in Hawaii in 1953, where it soon replaced 'Chinese Cavendish' in commercial plantations and also became the third most popular backyard banana (after 'Chinese Cavendish' and 'Hawaiian Apple').

Morphological characteristics

The pseudostem of Williams has dark brown, black or red streaks.

The rachis is only partly instead of fully clothed, with a long naked section of rachis and a crowded cluster of leaf-like bracts right above the male bud and very small neutral flowers just below the fruit.

The colour of the bract internal face is yellowish. Male flowers are whitish with yellow tips.

Fruits are 15-23 cm long, slightly curved, and about 5 times as long as broad. Their apex is more bottlenecked than for other Cavendish clones, especially before full maturity. Like other Cavendish, they have a tuft of dead floral relicts at the tip.
Agronomic traits, yield and fruit characteristics

Williams is a medium to tall plant (2.4-3.7 m)\(^1\). Time from planting to harvest is around 12 months. Williams has a very large, cylindrical bunch, with up to 300 evenly sized and shaped fruits that point evenly upwards.

Days from planting to flowering: 351.1\(^2\)
Days from flowering to harvest: 188.2\(^2\)
Days from planting to harvest: 539.3\(^2\)
Height at shooting (cm): 161.2\(^2\)
Height at harvest (cm):
Girth at shooting (cm): 57.9\(^2\)
Functional leaves at shooting: 12.4\(^2\)
Total leaves at shooting: 12.7\(^2\)
Mean bunch weight (kg): 25.8, 28.2, 28.5\(^2\)
Number of hands:
Total number of fruits:
Number of fruits on hand:
Finger length (cm): 18.3, 19.7\(^2\)
Finger girth (cm): 12.1, 12.4\(^2\)
Finger weight (g):
Yield (t/ha):

Reaction to pests and diseases

'Williams' is highly susceptible to black leaf streak and to *Mycosphaerella* leaf speckle\(^3\). Epidemics of Cordana leaf spot have occurred on 'Williams' in New South Wales, Australia\(^4\).

It is resistant to *Fusarium* wilt race 1, but susceptible to race 4\(^5\).

It was found to be susceptible to *Radopholus similis*\(^6\).

'Williams' is susceptible to *Banana bunchy top virus*\(^7\).

Fruits are less susceptible to cigar end rot\(^1\).

Reaction to abiotic stress

'Williams' has good tolerance to wind\(^1\). In St Lucia, 'Robusta' suffered 2.5 times more wind damage than 'Williams'\(^8\).

While it is not especially cold tolerant\(^1\), 'Williams' can grow in cooler environments\(^2\). Low temperatures can induce choking in 'Williams'.
Williams seems less sensitive to water stress than 'Grande Naine', but more sensitive than 'Robusta'.

**Recommendations for cultivation**

The heavy bunch often requires propping to prevent toppling.

**Uses**

Dessert type

**References**


**See also on this website**

Photos of 'Williams' in Musarama
Articles on 'Williams' in Musalit
Local names for 'Williams' in the cultivar checklist
Musapedia pages on cultivars:
- Apantu
- Asupina
- Bira
- Bogoya
- Bungulan
- Figue Pomme
- Gerei Langi
- Giant Cavendish
- Grande Naine
- Gros Michel
- Huamoa
- Iholena Ilele