

Fungi associated with basal stem rot found

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In news-Recently, researchers from Kerala have identified two new species of fungi from the genus *Ganoderma* – ***Ganoderma keralense* and *G. pseudo applanatum***, that are associated with coconut stem rot.

About Basal stem rot disease & recent discoveries-

- Basal rot, also called bulb rot, is a widespread plant disease caused by a variety of fungi and bacteria that can infect all flower and crop bulbs.
- Basal stem rot of coconut is known by several names in different parts of India: ***Ganoderma wilt*** (Andhra Pradesh), ***Anabe Roga*** (Karnataka) and ***Thanjavur wilt*** (Tamil Nadu), to mention a few.
- The infection begins at the roots, but **symptoms include discolouration and rotting of stem and leaves.**
- In the later stages, **flowering and nut set decreases and finally the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*) dies.**
- A reddish brown oozing has been reported only in India.
- Once infected, recovery of the plants is not likely.
- Another sign of infection is **presence of shelf-like “basidiomata,” which are the fruiting or reproductive structures of the fungus,** on the tree trunks.
- The basidiomata bear **spores** which are dispersed through wind and sometimes with the help of insects and this is how the pathogen spreads from one host to the other.
- Since the fungus is microscopic, it is only detected after the symptoms start manifesting or when the reproductive structures are borne, which can be too late.