

# Fusarium or Panama Disease (Banana)

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In news

Recently, Indian scientists have found a cure for Panama Disease

A brief note on the issue

- The scientists of Indian Council of Agriculture Research or ICAR, have found a cure for Panama Disease one of the most dreaded agricultural diseases.
- For the first time, Indian scientists have brought out a biopesticide that can control the disease. This biopesticide has been made using another fungus.

What is Panama disease/Fusarium Wilt?

- The fungal disease, called Fusarium Wilt, is popularly known as the 'Panama Disease' and afflicts banana plants
- Panama Disease is caused by a soil borne fungus with a name called Fusarium Oxysporum f. Sp cubense.
- One of its **strains which is called 'Tropical Race 4' or 'TR4' has created** the most havoc, threatening almost 80 per cent of the global banana production.
- It is the first disease of bananas to have spread globally in the first half of the 20th century.
- The epidemic started in Central America on the susceptible 'Gros Michel' banana, which at the time dominated the global export trade.
- The Fusarium fungus resides below ground and infects the plant through its roots.
- The infection then stops water and essential nutrients from being transported to the rest of the plant.
- The leaves begin to wilt, and the stem of the plant

starts turning dark brownish before the plant dies.

- If one plant gets it, then it is most likely that an entire plantation can be wiped out.
- This disease is sometimes referred to as 'banana cancer'
- It affects the Cavendish variety or the G9 Banana cultivar, which is the most widely grown banana in the world.

### Types of Bananas in India

- In India, more than 60 per cent of bananas are of the G9 variety.
- Their different names are 'Grand Naine', 'Robusta', 'Bhusaval', 'Basrai' and 'Shrimanth'.
- In India at least four Indian states Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have been badly affected by this disease. All these are areas where the Cavendish variety is grown.