**Strategies for control of Sigatoka diseases in Banana.**

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**Abstract**

Sigatoka, a fungal disease, is a severe fungal infection spread worldwide. This fungus can be seen mostly in banana plants. This disease can be commonly identified in banana trees such as the Kolikuttu banana, Ambul banana, and Ladyfinger banana. The ultimate hope of banana farmers is to harvest a healthy crop. As the Sigatoka fungus affects banana cultivation like an epidemic, low yield and crop damage can be seen widely. This fungus attacks the leaves of the banana plant and the leaf dies completely. Sigatoka can be seen in two types namely Yellow Sigatoka and Black Sigatoka. Both these varieties are common in Sri Lanka. Agricultural researchers or agronomists have not yet been able to find any specific treatment for this fungus other than control treatments. Various control methods are developed by the farmers themselves and they try to control this disease by using those control methods. Three control methods of Mr. P.H Gnanaratne, a banana farmer in the Ambalantota area, are mentioned here. Cut off all the diseased leaves and leave only five or six healthy leaves of the plant, which are needed for photosynthesis. This is usually done for plants with a banana cane. Another trick is to observe the diseased leaves every seven days and cut off the top of the leaves. It is done this way because this fungus spreads from the top of the leaves. Another trick is switching from one type of fungicide to another when using fungicides every twenty-one days. These fungicides are used interchangeably to prevent the Sigatoka fungus from adapting to the same fungicide. By using these tactics Mr. Gnanarathna has been able to successfully control the Sigatoka fungus.



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