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A NEW TREATMENT FOR BARK CANKER ON COCOA

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Bark canker on cocoa is caused by the fungus *Phytophthora palmivora*. It can be very damaging on trees of all ages. The disease was described in an article in Harvest in 1979 (Cocoa canker and sudden death, HARVEST 5 (2): pp. 71-76). In that article a treatment for canker was described which involved scraping the bark and painting it with difolatan or copper fungicides. Since then we have developed a better treatment, as follows:

1. Lightly scrape the outer bark with a bushknife just enough to find out how big the canker is.
2. Paint the whole canker with 1% Ridomil 25 MP. One percent is 10 g in 1 litre of water. This is about one matchbox full in three beer bottles full of water.

This treatment is also described in L.A.E.S. Information Bulletin No. 25 (revised March 1981).

Ridomil is a very effective fungicide for controlling canker and is much better than either copper or difolatan. It penetrates through the bark and kills the fungus inside.

Cankers often start around the damage made by insects like *Pantorhytes* or longicorns. When

you use the insecticide recommended by D.P.I. to treat these insects, you should add Ridomil to the insecticide mixture so that the mixture contains 1% Ridomil. A typical mixture would be: 50 ml dichlorvos or fenthion, 400 ml white oil, 1200 ml water, 2 ml wetting agent, 16.5 g Ridomil. This will make sure that you kill any cankers that are starting around the insect channels at the same time as you kill the insects. More details about controlling longicorns are given in L.A.E.S. Information Bulletin No. 18 and HARVEST 5 (3): pp. 200-202 (1979).

D.P.I. does not recommend treating canker in old, badly damaged trees. It is better to replant these trees than waste money on trying to treat them.

Ridomil can only be bought in 5 kg packets, at K110 per packet. It can be bought from New Guinea Cocoa Ltd, Agquip Ltd or Elvee Trading Ltd in Rabaul, Harrisons and Crosfield Ltd in Madang and distributors of agricultural chemicals in other towns.

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