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Agriculture department detects bud rot

Warned farmers to exercise caution when moving plants to stop the spread.

By Rivaldo Jantjies, Bloomberg 22 Jan 2025 ⌚ 12:35



Image: Waldo Swiegers/Bloomberg

Officials in South Africa, the world's biggest exporter of citrus after Spain, discovered bud rot in commercial papaya orchards in two provinces and warned farmers to exercise caution when moving plants to stop the spread.

The agriculture department reported that it found the pathogen that's also known as gray mold and is capable of destroying thousands of hectares of various species including pineapple and citrus, in both the northernmost Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces.

It has started a delimiting survey in all production areas to determine the extent and spread of the pest in the country, and has set up phytosanitary measures to restrict the movement of host material from infested areas, the department said in a statement Wednesday.

"Farmers and community members are encouraged to practice effective cultural control," it said.

Officials also urged international travelers to avoid illegally importing agricultural commodities because this may introduce “new pests and diseases that are expensive and difficult to manage.”

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