

## PINK DISEASE

**Causal agent:** *Erythricium salmonicolor*

**Species range:** *Acacia mearnsii*, *Eucalyptus macarthurii*, *Podocarpus* and other indigenous tree species.

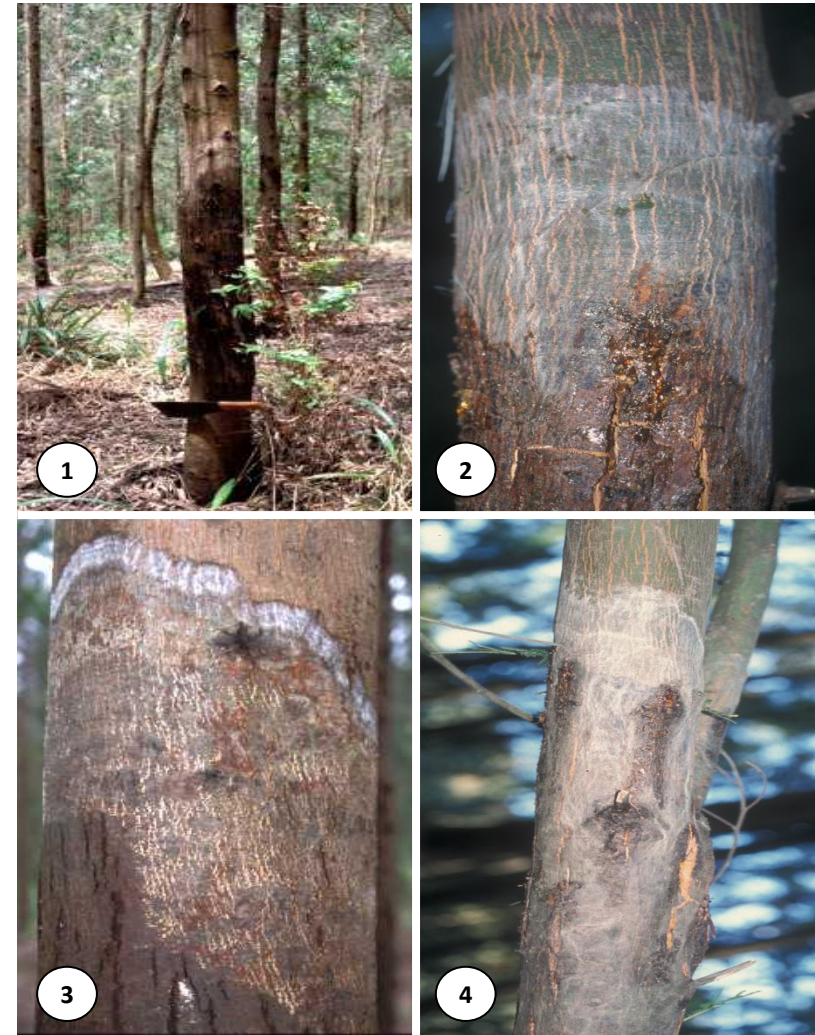
**Geographic distribution:** KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, Sabie

**Relative importance:** Pink disease results in stem cankers (Fig 1) which weakens the stems of trees and may result in breakage or top death. It is not very common in plantations in South Africa, but should be monitored in areas prone to high humidity such as in misty areas around the Midlands and Sabie.

**Symptoms and signs:** The easiest symptoms to recognise are the light to dark pink fungal growth on stem and branch cankers. These growths range from light 'cobweb' type growth at the margins of cankers (Figs 2, 4), to pink/white pustules of mycelia (Fig 3) on and around cankers and a crust of pink/salmon coloured mycelia on cankers. Stem and branch cankers are characterised by the cracking of the bark, the formation of 'target' shaped cankers and the production of epicormic shoots below the cankers.

**Biology:** The pathogen, *E. salmonicolor*, requires high relative humidity (>90%) for germination of spores.

**Management:** There is no recommended management in plantation forestry. Diseased ornamentals can be treated by pruning of infected branches and applying fungicides.



(1) Stem canker on *E. macarthurii* caused by *E. salmonicolor*, (2) stem canker on *A. mearnsii* showing cracking and pink fungal mycelium, (3) pustular phase of infection, with pink cobweb margin, (4) cobweb phase of infection.