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Book review

C. M. Messiaen & R. Lafon: Les maladies des plantes maraichères (Diseases of vegetable crops); 2nd Edition. Publ. 6-70, 441 pp, 123 figs. Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Paris 1971. Price NF 64.50.

The first edition of this book was published in two volumes in 1963. Since then, many studies have appeared on the subjects treated by the authors, especially on mechanisms and types of resistance. Because of the recent increase of the application of systemic fungicides moreover required a revision of the measures for disease control also became necessary.

This second edition has been published as one volume. The design is the same as that of the edition of 1963, but the authors present more background information, especially on disease control and they include the most recent fungicides in their advice for chemical control. Through the entire volume the reader is provided with up-to-date information on the various subjects, presented both clearly and carefully.

The first chapter deals with the determination of diseases on vegetables. A survey has been given of pathogenic fungi and bacteria with emphasis on the plant diseases they cause. A concise treatment of the transmission of viruses and mycoplasmas and the symptoms they cause has been presented. The second chapter deals with disease control in horticulture. Special attention is paid to disinfestation of soil either by steaming or by fumigants. Tables give details on effectiveness of various fungicides and on compatibility of mixtures of biocides.

The main part of the volume, viz. thirteen chapters (c. 300 pages), is devoted to the diseases of vegetable crops, grown in France and the mediterranean countries, with special emphasis on diseases of tomato, Cucurbitaceae, bean, lettuce, onion, garlic and leek. Each chapter contains notes on cultivation, a description of the various diseases, and of the circumstances favouring their development. Differences in symptoms and pathogens have clearly been described, often well illustrated with photographs or schematic drawings. When known, control measures are described in detail. Especially soilborne and vascular wilt diseases receive much attention. Nematodes and other plant parasitic animals are only included insofar as they give symptoms similar to those caused by fungi and bacteria or when they transmit viruses, bacteria and fungal spores.

References, in total about 33 pages, are listed at the end of each chapter. They are well selected, only the most pertinent and especially the recent references being given. In the text there is little reference to the sources even when recently acquired data are cited. This promotes legibility, but sometimes it might be felt as a disadvantage. For instance it is reported that after soil steaming the *Mortierella* spp. increase because of their heat-resistance, but much time is needed to find out from which literature this observation has been taken.

References in the text by numbers in parenthesis would have facilitated this, without reducing legibility.

The mycological repertory contains a description of the morphological characters and often of the isolation procedures of all pathogenic fungi mentioned in the volume. These descriptions would have been clearer if simple line drawings of characteristic structures (e.g. spores, sporocarps) had been given or if reference had been made to figures elsewhere in the book.

This handbook in which much experience and recent information is so clearly and accurately presented, is not only indispensable for well-informed growers and advisory officers, but also for phytopathologists working on vegetable crops.

A translation in English is eagerly awaited.

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