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Book review

A.F. Sherf & A.A. Macnab, 1986. *Vegetable diseases and their control*, 2nd edition, John Wiley & Sons, New York, VII + 728 pp. £ 45.65.

The wide variety of vegetable crops makes the writing of a general book on their diseases a heavy task. New books in this field are therefore relatively rare, and not even those published in major languages such as English, French or German are often regularly updated. The present book is thus welcome.

The authors stress the practical orientation of their book, the audience being defined as ranging from commercial growers to university workers. The contents warrant this.

The first edition under the same title was published in 1960, by C. Chupp and A.F. Sherf. But for some minor modifications, the outline of the 1960 edition, presentation of the diseases by crops, has been maintained. However the original chapter on general diseases (like bacterial soft-rot and gray mold) has been omitted. These diseases are now treated separately with the crops concerned. Sometimes, however, especially for nematodes, repetitive descriptions are avoided by referring the reader to details discussed in chapters on other crops.

After an introductory chapter on 'Disease causes and controls', diseases are listed according to an impressive range of vegetables, each with its own chapter: asparagus, artichoke, and Jerusalem artichoke/snap and dry beans/Lima bean/beet/carrot/celery/corn/crucifers/cucurbits/eggplant/lettuce/onion, garlic, leeks, and shallots/pea/pepper/spinach/sweet potato/tomato/and minor crops (okra, parsley, parsnip, and salsify). The arrangement of the diseases under each crop makes identification easy. Symptoms, life-cycle of the causal organism, and control are described for major and minor diseases. A list of references immediately follows each disease description.

The text of the second edition has been completely rewritten, and the updating is remarkable. It counted 326 lists of references, of which 67 had at least one reference of 1983, 1984 or 1985. With such a system, however, there is much duplication as is demonstrated by the referring to the 1984 Compendium of Pea Diseases in 16 different lists of references of pea diseases. Moreover recent references mainly concern publications by the American Phytopathological Society, e.g. half of the references since 1983 are from the journal *Plant Disease* alone. A list of general references and a glossary are added at the end of the book.

A book by two authors only on such a vast subject, and covering about 700 pages of text, cannot be perfect. Some remarks may illustrate this.

On p. 251 black rot of crucifers is characterized as 'the most serious disease of crucifers worldwide'. Five pages later clubroot is mentioned to be 'probably the most serious disease of crucifer crops worldwide'.

The claim that only one viroid disease of vegetables is known (p. 7) is incorrect. For tomatoes, three are known and for cucumbers one.

The naming of causal fungi is conservative and not always correct. The editing of the names has sometimes been inconsistent. Thus 'f. sp.' alternates with 'f' or 'var'. The index is quite good, but not perfect. *Alternaria dauci*, for instance, is missing in the list of *Alternaria* species. Printing errors are recurrent, although mostly restricted to just one incorrect character.

To the European reader, the orientation to North America has some drawbacks. Measures are not in the metric system. The size of an eelworm is more easily grasped when indicated as 5 mm than as 3/16 inch. Discussing resistance to BCMV in bean, Drijfhout's important work in the Netherlands (E. Drijfhout, 1978. Genetic interaction between *Phaseolus vulgaris* and bean common mosaic virus with implications for strain identification and breeding for resistance. Pudoc, Wageningen) has been completely ignored. Also the authors seem to be unaware that Western Europe is accustomed to a very satisfactory resistance of slicing cucumbers to *Corynespora cassiicola* and tomatoes to *Cladosporium fulvum* (*Fulvia fulva*).

The illustrations merit special mention. The black-and-white figures are nearly always satisfactory and of help in identification, but this does not hold for the picture of leaf mold of tomato (p. 649). For *Alternaria dauci* (leaf blight of carrot) and angular leaf spot of bean, the illustrations in the 1960 edition (p. 186 and 137) were better than the new ones (p. 124 and 64). The frontispiece with eight colour pictures of disease symptoms serves no purpose, and may raise false expectations.

In conclusion, I realize that bachelors' wives and children are well trained. I admire and envy what the authors of the present book have achieved. The book is highly recommended to all of the intended audience. I will certainly use my review copy heavily!

M. Gerlagh