

Book review

C.A. Clark & J.W. Moyer, 1988. Compendium of sweet potato diseases. APS Press, American Phytopathological Society, St Paul. 74 pp. ISBN 0-89054-089-6. Price \$ 30.

The Disease Compendium series of the American Phytopathological Society, published in the past decennia, covers a wide range of economically important crops. The information presented helps field pathologists and extension workers quickly to diagnose several diseases and to recommend control measures. The latest issue in the series is devoted to sweet potato, belatedly highlighted as an important food crop. The structure of the new compendium is straightforward and concise, well covering the relevant information. The chapters on infectious diseases, non-infectious disorders and disorders of unknown aetiology are illustrated with clear and often excellent pictures, although some of the colour plates lack definition. References to the literature are extensive and up-to-date. Diseases caused by fungi occupy a major part of the compendium, encompassing plant bed, field and storage diseases, storage rots and floral, seed and seedling disorders. Information on viruses of sweet potato is, unfortunately, still inadequate. Hence the list of viruses is limited. As sweet potato is propagated vegetatively, the most common source of viruses is infected propagation material. The section on viruses may speed up visual diagnosis of some severe and acute virus diseases. Quite rightly, it is pointed out, however, that visual diagnosis cannot be done reliably at all stages of the production cycle without antisera and a range of diagnostic hosts. For many countries in the developing world growing sweet potatoes these techniques of detection and diagnosis are not yet available.

The authors are to be complimented on this new and useful compendium. The book clearly heralds the loss of anonymity of sweet potato as a food crop of global importance.

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