

## Book review

S. Gangopadhyay, 1983. Current concepts on fungal diseases of rice. Today and Tomorrow's Printers & Publishers, New Delhi. XVI-349 pp. Rs 195.00/\$ 39.00.

When someone is asked to review a book on rice diseases, it is tempting to compare it with the outstanding work of S.H. Ou 'Rice diseases' (1972), published by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute at Kew, England, and to see how far the new book has shifted the scientific frontier.

The author expected this, for in the preface of his book he states: 'The accelerated progress of research in rice diseases started in the Seventies only after the necessity to change the cropping pattern . . .', and further on: 'So it seems to be quite justified to write a manual of this kind after a lapse of 10 years'. The present book must be considered therefore, at least in the author's intention, as a successor of Ou's work. I doubt whether it does more than supplement Ou's book for the international rice research world.

As the title indicates, the book deals only with fungal diseases of rice. The bacterial and viral diseases, so important in rice, are left aside. Some diseases, such as sheath blight, stem rot and sheath rot, were considered of minor importance at the time of Ou's publication, but have gained in importance in the last 10 years and are treated in separate chapters (Chap. 2, 4 and 5). Rice blast and brown spot rank first in literature coverage. However they are described in detail in Chapters 1 and 3 of this book and are separated by a description of sheath blight, obviously considered by the author as more important nowadays. There are chapters dealing with Fusariosis (Chap. 6), false smut (Chap. 8) and kernel bunt (Chap. 9), fungi on and in rice seeds (Chap. 10) and diseases of secondary importance (Chap. 7). The author has done an excellent job in adding a chapter on 'Mycotoxins in rice', a subject of major importance, as mycotoxins pose special problems during the storage of seeds.

Each chapter has almost the same subdivision into 7 to 10 sections. This enhances the comparability of the different diseases and the utility of the book. After a short introduction on history of each disease, the author describes the symptoms, the assessment of loss, the epidemiology (called: 'epidome'), the morphology (called: 'the fungus'), the genetics of resistance, a scoring system and control measures. The section headings do not always correspond with the content. Sections on morphology, for instance, include details of epidemiology and sections on the assessment of loss do not really indicate the ways of crop-loss assessment and could better be included in the introduction.

Each chapter is provided with a section called: 'Scoring system'. This is useful for those involved in epidemiological field research and extension. But here too, some of information could better be worked into other sections.

It is a pity that the Table of contents only shows the trivial disease names and that no indication is given of the causal fungi, which would have been more practical, especially since some changes have been made in taxonomic nomenclature.

The many printing errors are irritating, in spite of a list of errata on the last page. The reader will easily discover that this errata list should be twice as long. These printing errors (e.g. VanderPlank's equation at the bottom of page 115) and omissions (missing literature references in the bibliography) augur badly for the chemical formulae, mathematical equations and figures in the various chapters.

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