

Book review

D.C. McGee, 1988. Maize diseases. A reference for seed technologists. APS Press, American Phytopathological Society, St Paul, Minnesota. 150 pages, 52 black/white illustrations. Price \$ 32.

The author states that seed producers and seed-related industries or agencies need information about plant diseases that is not in existing reference books. This compendium provides a data base on diseases of maize caused by fungi, bacteria, mycoplasmas, spiroplasmas and viruses. Information is provided for each disease against a standard set of items. The information given for each disease includes names of the disease, identity and variability of the pathogen, symptoms, economic importance, distribution, range of hosts, possibilities for control, seed-borne aspects, effect on seed quality, transmission, seed treatments, health tests on seed and key references.

The diseases are grouped into four categories according to the seed-borne and seedtransmission aspects of the pathogen. Seed-borne implies that the pathogen can be detected on, in or with the seed. 'Seed-transmitted' implies that infected seed is a means by which the pathogen can be transmitted to plants grown from the seed.

Part 1 deals with diseases that are seed-borne and seed-transmitted (20 fungal, 5 bacterial and 4 viral diseases), Part 2 with diseases that are seed-borne but not seed-transmitted (28 fungal, 1 bacterial, 1 spiroplasma and 2 viral diseases), Part 3 with diseases that are not seed-borne nor seed-transmitted (35 fungal, 7 bacterial, 1 mycoplasma and 31 viral diseases) and Part 4 with pathogens that infect maize by inoculation only (5 fungal and 10 bacterial diseases).

The diseases are conveniently arranged, and for each item characteristics are presented in a uniform way. The book looks monotonous in layout. It may be considered more a guide and less a manual to detect diseases visually in the field. However it gives a rather complete summary of maize diseases with their aspects and therefore it may be recommended.

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