

Book review

Handbook of Vegetable Pests. John L. Capinera. May 2001. 729 pp. Academic Press \$150 in the USA ISBN 0-12-158861-0.

A North American book has to cover a huge area with many climatic zones so it is not surprising that a book dealing with vegetable pests runs to over 700 pages. The majority of pests covered may be unfamiliar to European growers and crop protection workers. However, there will be many problems they do recognise as a result of the introduction of American pests to Europe and *vice versa*. The balance in this unwanted trade seems to have been mostly to the detriment of North America.

The book has introductory chapters on the major vegetable crops grown in North America, the main groups of pests and the appropriate pest control strategies. Specific chemical controls are not given because such information soon becomes out of date with changes in pesticide availability and registrations. An identification guide based on the types of pest likely to be found on the foliage, stems, roots, flowers, seeds, etc. of various specific vegetables or vegetable groups is given. The crops covered are globe artichoke, asparagus, beans, peas and related crops, beet and related crops, brassicas and related root crops, carrots and related crops, lettuce and related crops, okra, onion and related crops, rhubarb, cucurbits, maize, sweet potato, tomato and related crops, including potato.

The main part of the book describes pests in taxonomic order, with each species being covered in terms of its distribution, host plants, natural enemies, life cycle and descriptions of the various stages, the damage caused and the pest management options that are available. The book is illustrated with many line drawings and there are 15 colour plates containing 270 pictures, mostly of pests but some showing damaged plants.

An appendix to the book gives identification keys to various groups of pests, including brassica caterpillars, flea beetles, wireworms, common vegetable thrips and cutworms. Also listed are the addresses of sources of further information in the states and provinces of the USA and Canada. There is a glossary and 86 pages of references.

Farmers and pest control advisors in North America will obtain a great deal of useful information from this book which gives a thorough coverage of its subject matter. Whether European readers will find enough information relevant to them to make the book's purchase worthwhile is debatable, but they will certainly find something of interest within its pages.

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