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# IDM: A new approach to disease management
## (CONCEPT, ADVANTAGES AND IMPORTANCE)

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Plant diseases are considered an important biotic constraint which leads to significant crop losses worldwide. Over the past few decades application of pesticides was the dominant form of disease control in developed and increasingly in developing countries. However, many problems have been associated with such an approach such as the frequent emergence of fungicide resistance in pathogens and the harmful effects of fungicides to human health and the environment. The concept of Integrated Disease Management (IDM) where diseases are managed by integrating biological, cultural, physical and chemical control strategies in a holistic way rather than using a single component strategy proved to be more effective and sustainable.

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## Introduction

Integrated plant disease management can be defined as a decision-based process involving coordinated use of multiple tactics for optimizing the control of pathogen in an ecologically and economically. The implications are:

- Simultaneous management of multiple pathogens.
- Regular monitoring of pathogen effects, and their natural enemies and antagonists as well
- Use of economic or treatment thresholds when applying chemicals.
- Integrated use of multiple, suppressive tactics.

## Principles of Plant Disease Control

1. Avoidance - prevents disease by selecting a time of the year or a site where there is no inoculum or where the environment is not favorable for infection.
2. Exclusion - prevents the introduction of inoculum.
3. Eradication - eliminates, destroy, or inactivate the inoculum.
4. Protection - prevents infection by means of a toxicant or some other barrier to infection.
5. Resistance - utilizes cultivars that are resistant to or tolerant of infection.
6. Therapy - cure plants that are already infected.

## Factors affecting occurrences

Factors which affect Plant diseases are micro-organisms, including fungi, bacteria, viruses, mycoplasmas, etc. or maybe incited by physiological causes including high or low temperatures, lack or excess of soil moisture and aeration, deficiency or excess of plant nutrients, soil acidity or alkalinity, etc. Factors that limit the rate of disease development are the relatively low amounts of inoculum in the lag stage and the paucity of healthy plants available to the inoculum in the stationary stage.

The causative agents of disease in green plants number in a tens of thousands and include almost every form of life. But primary agents of disease may also be inanimate. Thus nonliving (abiotic) agents of disease include mineral deficiencies and excesses, air pollutants, biologically produced toxicants, improperly used pesticidal chemicals, and such other environmental factors as wind, water, temperature, and sunlight.

## Micro-organisms

The micro-organisms obtain their food either by breaking down dead plant and animal remains (saprophytes) or by attacking living plants and animals (parasites). In order to obtain nutrients, the parasitic organisms excrete enzymes or toxins and kill the cells of the tissues of the host plant, as a result of which either the whole plant or a part of it is damaged or killed, or considerable disturbance takes place in its normal metabolic processes.

## Parasites

One of the factors causing plant diseases is parasites, those living organisms that can colonize the tissues of their host-plant victims and can be transmitted from plant to plant. These biotic agents are, therefore, infectious, and the diseases they cause are termed infectious diseases. The infectious agents of plant diseases are treated in the standard textbooks on plant pathology.

**Ability to produce an inoculums**

The parasitic pest must produce an inoculum, some structure that is adapted for transmission to a healthy plant and this can either parasitize the host directly or develop another structure that can establish a parasitic relationship with the host. For example, inocula for viruses are the viral particles (virions); for bacteria, the bacterial cells; for fungi, various kinds of spores or the hyphal threads of mold; for nematodes, eggs or second-stage larvae.

**Agents/ Media for transportation of inoculum**

The inoculum must be transported from its source to a part of a host plant that can be infected. This dispersal of inoculum to susceptible tissue is termed inoculation. Agents of inoculation may be insects (for most viruses and mycoplasma like organisms and for some bacteria and fungi), wind (for many fungi), and splashing rain (for many fungi).

**Wounds, Natural openings**

The parasite must enter the host plant, which it can do (depending on the organism) in one or more of three ways; through wounds, through natural openings, or by growing directly through the unbroken protecting surface of the host. Viruses are literally injected into the plant as the homopterous insect carrier probes and feeds within its host. Bacteria depend on wounds or natural openings (for example, stomates, hydathodes, and lenticels) for entrance, but many fungi can penetrate plant parts by growing directly through plant surfaces, exerting enormous mechanical pressure and possibly softening host surfaces by enzymatic action.

**Availability of food**

For occurrence of disease one of the factor affecting is, availability of nourishment to grow within its host. This act of colonizations is termed infection. Certainly the parasite damages the cytomplasmic memberanes of the host cells, making those membranes freely permeable to solutes that would nourish the parasite and parasitism certainly results from enzymatic attacks by the parasite upon carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids inside the host cell.

## Preventive and control measures

### A. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

**Cultural practices**

Cultural practices usually influence the development of disease in plants by affecting the environment. Such practices are intended to make the atmospheric, edaphic, or biological surroundings favorable to the crop plant, unfavorable to its parasites. Cultural practices that leads to disease control have little effect on the climate of a region but can exert significant influence on the microclimate of the crop plants in a field. Three stages of parasite's life cycle namely, Survival between crops, production of inoculum for the primary cycle and inoculation can be control by following preventive measures.

**Survival between Crops**

Organisms that survive in the soil can often be controlled by crop rotations with unsusceptible species. Depending on the system, either of two effects results. Catch crops have been used to control certain nematodes and other soil-borne pathogens. Soil-borne plant pathogens can be controlled by biological methods. Plant parasites may be controlled by antagonistic organisms that can be encouraged to grow luxuriantly by such cultural practices as green manuring and the use of appropriate soil additives. The soil-invading parasite thus becomes an a mensal in association with its antagonist. Soil-borne plant parasites may also be killed during their over-seasoning stages by such cultural practices as deep ploughing (as for the pathogen of southern leaf blight of corn), flooding (as for the cottony-rot pathogen and some nematodes), and frequent cultivation and fallow (as for the control of weeds that harbor plant viruses).

**Production of Inoculums for the Primary Cycle**

Environmental factors (particularly temperature, water, and organic and inorganic nutrients) significantly affect Inoculum production. Warm temperature usually breaks dormancy of over seasoning structures; rain may leach growth inhibitors from the soil and permit germination of resting spores; and special nutrients may stimulate the growth of over seasoning structures that produce inoculums.

**Dispersal of inoculums and inoculation**

Cultural practices that exemplify avoidance are sometimes used to prevent effective dissemination. A second hierarchy of regulatory disease control is plant quarantine, the legally enforced stoppage of plant pathogens at points of entry into political subdivisions. The Plant Quarantine Act of the United States governs importation of plant materials into the country and requires the state govt. to enforce particular measures. Also, states make regulations concerning the movement of plant materials into them or within them. E.g., Florida imposes quarantine against the citrus-canker bacterium, which was eliminated from the state earlier by means of cooperative efforts led by the Florida Department of Agriculture.

**Sample inspection**

One of the preventive measures to control the diseases is the use of sample inspection method. Laboratory evaluation of the representative sample drawn by the certification agency for the determination of germination, moisture content, weed seed content, admixture, purity, seedborne pathogens.

## B. Control Measures

**Chemical Control**

The pesticidal chemicals that control plant diseases may be used in very different ways, depending on the parasite to be controlled and on the circumstances it requires for parasitic activities. E.g., a water-soluble eradicative spray is applied once to dormant peach trees to rid them of the overwintering spores of the fungus of peach-leaf curl, whereas relatively insoluble protective fungicides are applied repeatedly to the green leaves of potato plants to safeguard them from penetration by the fungus of late blight. Also, systemic fungicidal chemicals may be used therapeutically.

**Seed Treatments**

Chemical treatments of seed may be effective in controlling plant pathogens in, on, and around planted seed. Seed treatment is therapeutic when it kills bacteria or fungi that infect embryos, cotyledons, or endosperms under the seed coat, eradicative when it kills spores of fungi that contaminate seed surfaces, and protective when it prevents penetration of soil-borne fungi into seedling stems. Certified seed is usually given treatment necessary for the control of certain diseases. Seed treatment is of two types; viz., physical and chemical. Physical treatments include hot-water treatment, solar-heat treatment (loose smut of wheat), and the like. Chemical treatments include use of fungicides and bactericides. These fungicides are applied to seed by different methods. In one method, the seed in small lots is treated in simple seed-treaters. The seed-dip method involves preparing fungicide suspension in water, often at field rates, and then dipping the seed in it for a specified time.

**Soil Treatments**

Soil-borne plant pathogens greatly increase their populations as soils are cropped continuously, and finally reach such levels that contaminated soils are unfit for crop production. Chemical treatments of soil that eradicate the plant pathogens therein offer the opportunity of rapid reclamation of infested soils for agricultural uses. Preplanting chemical treatment of field soils for the control of nematode-induced diseases, and fumigation of seedbed and greenhouse soils (with methyl bromide, for example) is commonly practiced to eradicate weeds, insects, and plant pathogens. Field applications of soil-treatment chemicals for fungus control are usually restricted to treatments of furrows. Formaldehyde or captan applied is effective against sclerotiaproducing fungi that cause seedling blights, stem rots, and root rots of many field crops. Other soil-treatment fungicides are vapam and "Vorlex." Soil treatments made at the time of planting are most effective against parasitic attacks that come early in the growing season.

**Protective sprays and dust**

Protective fungicides prevent germination, growth, and penetration. In order to use protective fungicides effectively, the farmer must not only select the right fungicide for the job, but also apply it in the right amount, at the right times, and in the right way. Too little fungicide fails to control disease; too much may be toxic to the plants to be protected. The farmer and applicator, therefore, must always follow use instructions to the letter. Timing of applications is also critical.

## Advantages

Integrated approach integrates preventive and corrective measures to keep pathogen from causing significant problems, with minimum risk or hazard to human and desirable components of their environment. Some of the benefits of an integrated approach are as follows:

- Promotes sound structures and healthy plants
- Promotes the sustainable bio based disease management alternatives.
- Reduces the environmental risk associated with management by encouraging the adoption of more ecologically benign control tactics
- Reduces the potential for air and ground water contamination
- Protects the non-target species through reduced impact of plant disease management activities.
- Reduces the need for pesticides and fungicides by using several management methods
- Reduces or eliminates issues related to pesticide residue
- Reduces or eliminates re-entry interval restrictions
- Decreases workers, tenants and public exposure to chemicals
- Alleviates concern of the public about pest & pesticide related practices.
- Maintains or increases the cost-effectiveness of disease management programs

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