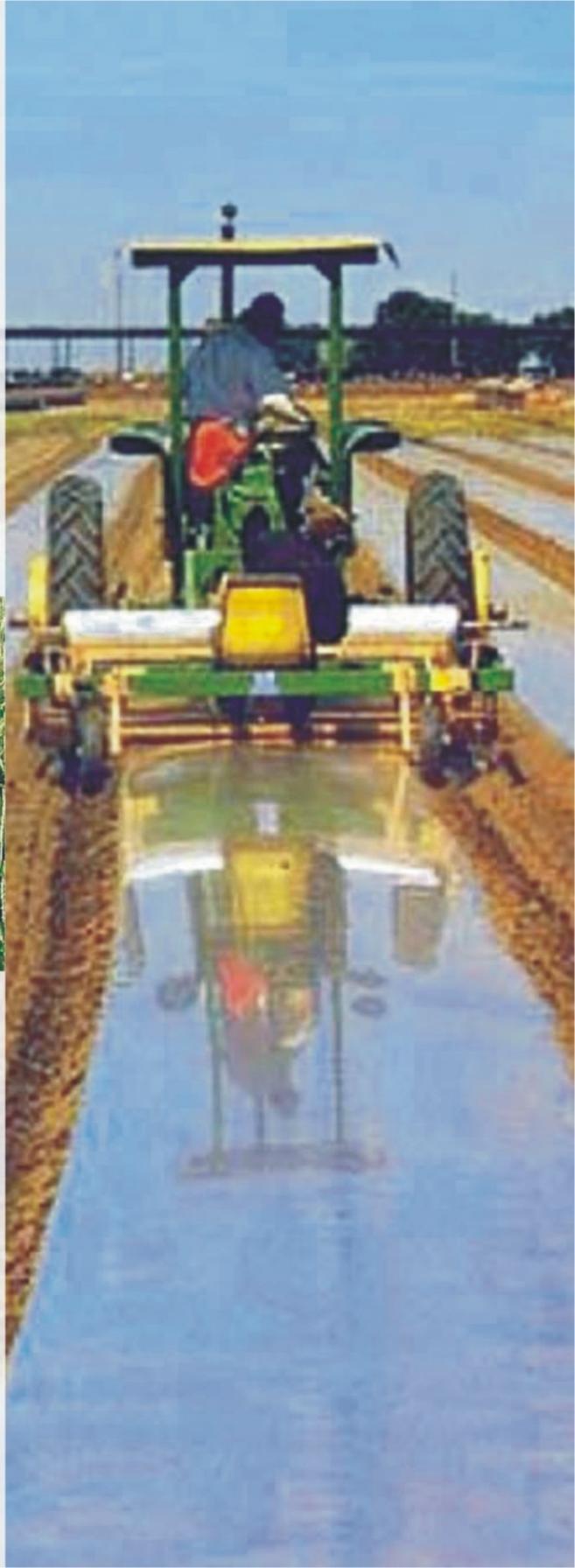


Biofumigation and Solarization for Management of Soil-Borne Plant Pathogens



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PREFACE

Soil-borne plant pathogens include bacteria, fungi, nematodes, insects and weeds. Bacteria such as *Pseudomonas* and *Ralstonia* cause wilt disease in solanaceous vegetables and banana, and *Agrobacterium* cause crown galls in many plants. Fungi such as *Pythium* cause damping-off in vegetable nurseries, *Phytophthora* causes late blight, *Armillaria* and *Rhizoctonia* cause root rot, *Verticillium* and *Fusarium* are known to cause wilt. Nematodes such as *Meloidogyne* cause root-knot disease in vegetables, *Heterodera* and *Globodera* infect potato, *Pratylenchus* and *Radopholus* infect banana. Soil-borne plant pathogens also interact with other soil-borne pathogens and non-pathogens to trigger severe disease complexes. Control of soil-borne plant pathogens is a very difficult and challenging task.

One of the principal strategies used by the growers of high-value horticultural crops to combat these organisms is pre-plant soil disinfestation. Soil fumigants are the most effective disinfestation chemicals, and methyl bromide (MB) is the most important soil fumigant chemical used by growers around the world. It is a broad spectrum pesticide with excellent activity against most potential soil pests. However, MB was identified as a risk to the stratospheric ozone layer in 1992 and targeted for gradual phase out worldwide by 2010 by means of an international treaty, Montreal Protocol. The impending loss of MB as a soil fumigant has stimulated intensive efforts to develop and implement suitable replacement strategies. Among the alternative control methods being touted to replace methyl bromide are biofumigation and soil solarization that are among the most useful of the non-chemical disinfestation methods.

Biofumigation can be defined as the incorporation of biomass into soil, resulting in the release of toxic volatiles that reduce soil pests. Brassica cover crops may reduce or suppress some pathogens, including *Verticillium* in potato; *Pythium*, *Fusarium* and *Rhizoctonia* root rots in beans; *Pythium* in lettuce; pink root in onion; *Aphanomyces*, *Pythium*, *Rhizoctonia* and *Fusarium* root rot in peas; and cavity spot and *Fusarium* in carrot. Other benefits of biofumigation include: improved soil texture, increased water holding capacity, and improved soil microbial community structure. The Brassicaceae family is a source of potential biofumigation material. Family members contain secondary plant metabolites called glucosinolates, which are believed to be involved in plant defense. When tissues are damaged, glucosinolates are enzymatically broken down by

myrosinase to produce nitriles, thiocyanates, isothiocyanates and other products. Isothiocyanates, the predominant breakdown products, have biocidal activity on fungi, bacteria, nematodes and other pests.

Solarization is the use of clear polyethylene film to cover moistened soil and trap lethal amounts of heat from solar radiation. Solarization could be a useful soil disinfestation method, especially in areas with hot and arid conditions during the summer months. The pesticidal activity of solarization was found to stem from a combination of physical, chemical and biological effects. Soil solarization is effective against species of *Pythium*, *Phytophthora*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium*, *Verticillium*, *Ralstonia*, *Pseudomonas* and other soil-borne pathogens.

Biofumigation and solarization can also be integrated for the effective management of soil-borne plant pathogens.

The information on biofumigation and solarization for the management of soil-borne plant pathogens (bacteria, fungi, nematodes, insects and weeds) in horticultural (fruits, vegetables, plantation, spice, tuber, ornamental, medicinal and aromatic crops) and other crops (cotton, tobacco, wheat, rice, soybean, sugar beet and sunflower) is very much scattered. There is no book at present which comprehensively and exclusively deals with the above aspects on horticultural and other crops. The present book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the principles of biofumigation and solarization. The second part deals with crop-wise management of soil-borne plant pathogens using biofumigation (crop rotation, cover cropping, intercropping, trap cropping, green manuring, etc.) and solarization (using transparent and coloured polythene sheets and live mulches) in horticultural and other crops. The book is illustrated with excellent quality photographs enhancing the quality of publication. The book is written in lucid style, easy to understand language along with adoptable recommendations for enhancing the productivity.

This book can serve as a practical guide to practicing farmers of horticultural crops. Further, it is a useful reference to policy makers, research and extension workers and students. The material can also be used for teaching post-graduate and under-graduate courses. Suggestions to improve the contents of the book are most welcome (E-mail: reddy_parvatha@yahoo.com). The publisher, Scientific Publishers (India), Jodhpur, deserves commendation for their professional contribution.

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CONTENTS

Section I: Principles of Biofumigation

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Methyl Bromide Alternatives	2
1.2. Solarization	3
1.3. Biofumigation	4
1.4. Naturally Occurring Isothiocyanates	5
1.5. Source of Nutrients	6
1.6. Improved Soil Quality	6
2. Biofumigation	7
2.1. What is Biofumigation?	7
2.2. What Benefit can it add to Existing Farming Systems?	8
2.3. Biofumigation and Solarization	9
2.4. Composts and Biofumigation	9
2.5. Green Manuring and Biofumigation	10
2.6. Soil Health and Fertility	13
2.7. Opportunities to Enhance Biofumigation	13
2.8. Biofumigation Crops	15
3. Solarization	21
3.1. Results of Solarization	22
3.2. Adaptability of Solarization	26
3.3. Factors that Limit Effectiveness of Solarization	28
3.4. Combining Solarization with Other Control Methods	30
3.5. Economics of Solarization	33
4. Mode of Action	35
4.1. Biofumigation	35
4.2. Solarization	51
5. Methodology	55
5.1. Biofumigation	55

5.2. Solarization	57
6. Disease Management	64
6.1. Biofumigation	64
6.2. Solarization	67
7. Nematode Management	70
7.1. Biofumigation	70
7.2. Solarization	73
8. Weed Management	77
8.1. Biofumigation	77
8.2. Solarization	78
9. Insect Management	85
9.1. Biofumigation	85
9.2. Solarization	91
10. Source of Nutrients	93
10.1. Biofumigation	93
10.2. Solarization	99
11. Improved Soil Quality by Biofumigation	101
11.1. Increased Infiltration Rate	101
11.2. Reduced Wind Erosion	103
11.3. Reduced Soil Compaction	103
12. Commercial Products for Biofumigation	105
12.1. Caliente Mustards	105
12.2. Mustclean Mustards	111
12.3. Organic Biofumigation Mix 1	112
12.4. Seedco Commercial Products	112
12.5. Biofum Blends (Mixtures for Biofumigation)	113
13. Horticultural Crops	114
13.1. Importance of Horticultural Crops	114
13.2. Export of Horticultural Produce	115
14. Fruit Crops	120
14.1. Banana	120
14.2. Citrus	133

14.3. Papaya	139
14.4. Pineapple	139
14.5. Sapota	141
14.6. Litchi	142
14.7. Mango	142
14.8. Grapevine	142
14.9. Mulberry	147
14.10. Guava	148
14.11. Apple	149
14.12. Stone Fruits	153
14.13. Peach	154
14.14. Pear	157
14.15. Apricot	158
14.16. Strawberry	158
14.17. Pomegranate	165
14.18. Ber	166
14.19. Amla	166
14.20. Custard Apple	166
15. Vegetable Crops	167
15.1 Potato	169
15.2 Tomato	198
15.3 Brinjal	235
15.4 Chilli	235
15.5 Sweet Pepper	246
15.6 Onion	253
15.7. Garlic	260
15.8. Okra	263
15.9. Carrot	265
15.10. Radish	268
15.11. Cabbage and Cauliflower	269
15.12. Pea	276
15.13. Broad Bean	277
15.14. Cowpea	282
15.15. Pigeonpea	285
15.16. Chickpea	288

15.17. Water Melon	292
15.18. Musk Melon	295
15.19. Cucumber	297
15.20. Pumpkin	301
15.21. Bottle Gourd	302
15.22. Pointed Gourd	302
15.23. Lettuce	303
15.24. Spinach	312
15.25. Baby Corn	312
15.26. Mushroom	313
16. Ornamental, Medicinal, Aromatic and Tuber Crops	315
16.1. Ornamental Crops	315
16.2. Medicinal Crops	327
16.3. Aromatic Crops	313
16.4. Tuber Crops	338
17. Plantation and Spice Crops	343
17.1. Plantation Crops	343
17.2. Spice Crops	356
18. Other Crops	373
18.1. Cotton	373
18.2. Tobacco	379
18.3. Wheat	380
18.4. Rice	382
18.5. Corn	383
18.6. Sugar Beet	383
18.7. Soybean	387
18.8. Sunflower	388
18.9. Hyacinth and Crocus	388
References	390
Subject Index	424