

Preface

This student-oriented textbook for courses in plant pathology presents the basic dynamics of the subject against a backdrop of the agricultural system and the needs and problems of our society. The special emphasis of this book lies in what is sometimes called, rather loosely, the "principles" of plant pathology. What this means is that it strives to avoid becoming a catalog of diseases, their causes, characteristics, and cures. Rather, it looks upon plant disease as one complex of phenomena within the much larger complex of the biological sciences. It tries to portray plant pathology in such a way as to be understandable to the general biologist, yet in sufficient depth to be suitable for one who fully intends to specialize in that field. There is a conscious effort to look at the subject matter of plant pathology from the viewpoint of the nonspecialist—on the strong conviction that this is, at one and the same time, the best possible viewpoint from which the specialist should also commence his study.

Certain aspects of general agriculture are briefly treated. Long experience in teaching undergraduates has convinced me that it is risky indeed to assume that students generally are aware of what one might think must be self-evident items of background information.

Finally, throughout the book, I have striven to prepare the materials as though only students would see it. Clearly, one cannot lose sight of the student at any point without grave risk of introducing needless complexities. The biological sciences are quite difficult enough despite all that can be done; it would be most unfortunate to let nonessentials intrude. Technical terms have therefore been reduced to a minimum.

A review of the growth of the science and art of plant pathology is made substantially easier by the appearance, within the last decade or so, of a large amount of comprehensive and analytical literature. While this material is no substitute for first-hand familiarity with original re-

search, the availability of review articles and monographs, properly used, greatly broadens and strengthens the student's early education. These and other important references are included in the citations at the end of this text.

To an extent substantially greater than the writer of an advanced treatise, the author of an introductory text must depend on materials provided by his colleagues in a number of specialties within the discipline. I am grateful to the many persons who supplied illustrations and supporting material, often at real inconvenience, and to those who so generously permitted me to quote passages from their published work.

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