

## Tests On Flax Provide Knowledge of Disease Resistance

The first concrete evidence of substances in plants that make them physiologically resistant or susceptible to disease has been uncovered by a team of Federal scientists, the U S Department of Agriculture reported recently.

A protein of the globulin type found in a particular race of flax rust fungus was found to occur also in flax susceptible to the same

race of the fungus. Plants resistant to that particular race do not contain the protein.

These findings were made by Dr Harold Flor of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, John A. Doubly of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, and Dr Carl O. Claggett of Pennsylvania State University. Their discovery is a

basic one in plant science. It may prove especially important to plant breeders searching for disease-resistant plant material. Disease resistance is a primary objective in the development of almost all new crop varieties.

Globulins from each of 4 lines of flax and 4 races of the rust fungus were used in analyses by the scientists. The four flax lines differed only in their ability to produce disease in the flax.

The tests showed a clear relationship between suscep-

tibility to a particular fungus race and the presence in the plant of the protein that characterizes the race. Flax line No 1, for example, known to be susceptible to all four races, contained the characteristic proteins of all four. Line No 3 contained only the two proteins for the races to which it is susceptible, and it did not contain the proteins characteristic of the races to which it is resistant. Flax No. 2 contained the

three proteins for the races to which it is susceptible and lacked the protein for the race to which it is resistant. The fourth line of flax contained only the protein for the race of fungus to which it is susceptible and lacked the other three.

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