

# New tool being developed to identify diseases

NEWARK, Del. — Bacterial diseases on soybeans, peppers, peaches and other crops can severely reduce yields. It's not unusual, for example, for entire fields of cabbage to be wiped out by black rot. Yields on Delaware's



University of Delaware plant pathologist Myron Sasser works on system for selective screening of bacteria that make plants sick. System will help prevent or control diseases on several major food crops including corn, wheat, soybeans, and a number of fruits and vegetables.

profitable pepper crop were cut by 90 percent during the 1979 growing season because of another disease, bacterial leaf spot.

Two plant scientists at the University of Delaware's Experiment Station have been working on a highly selective method for screening seeds and other plant parts, as well as water and soil, for the presence of

different disease-causing bacteria.

Their idea is to develop a series of media on which samples can be cultured in the laboratory--each medium specific to one particular bacterium and to nothing else.

Most of the selective media presently used for bacterial screening just aren't choosy enough, ex-

plans plant pathologist Myron Sasser. On some, about any bacteria will grow.

So identification calls for value judgements on the part of the individuals doing the screening. The results sometimes aren't very accurate.

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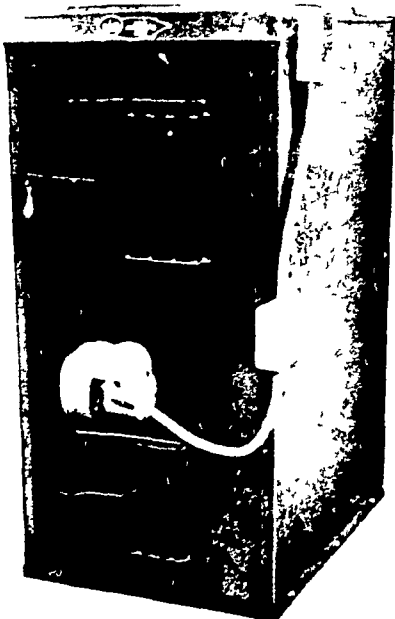
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