Decomposition of Organic Wastes and Amendments Studied at Riverside

THE BENCH OF TEST TUBES being checked by a laboratory assistant in the photo to right is one of experiments to determine: (1) The decomposition rate of wood chips, such as apricot, peach, walnut, and other organic wastes from orchards (this aspect of the research in the Department of Soils and Plant Nutrition, U.C., Riverside, is part of an air pollution study aimed at finding alternatives to burning orchard prunings and other wastes); and (2) The rate of decomposition of soil organic amendments such as peat moss, forest tree bark, shavings and chips used for planting and potting mixes (for planting mixes, long lasting organic materials are most desirable).

NEW PUBLICATIONS

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CALIFORNIA CROP TRENDS: YIELDS, ACREAGES, AND PRODUCTION AREAS. Cir. 551. In this circular information often requested is brought together and summarized to show trends in the yields, acreages, and production areas of 42 major California crops. The graphs show *what* the trends have been; the text tells *why*, and summarizes major factors behind the changes. The report serves two purposes; it records longtime trends and short-run changes, and it aids in understanding future cropping possibilities.

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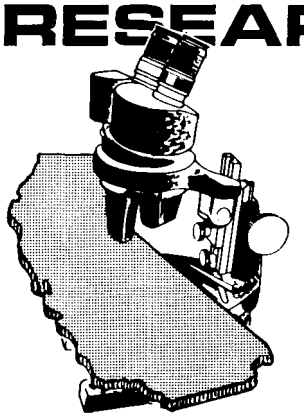
RESEARCH PREVIEWS



A continuing program of research in many aspects of agriculture is carried on at University campuses, field stations, leased areas, and many temporary plots loaned by cooperating landowners throughout the state. Listed below are some of the projects currently under way, but on which no formal progress reports can yet be made.

WIND PATTERNS VS AIR POLLUTION

Agricultural engineers using the 1,500-foot television transmitting tower near Walnut Grove, and other equipment, have been able to plot wind patterns in the Central Valley. It is hoped that this information can be used for better methods of air pollution control during the stubble-burning season.

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SOIL ANALYSIS BY PHOTO?

Soil specialists believe it may be possible to use infrared color photography to detect the presence of excess salts or alkali in soils from great distances—perhaps even from satellites. Current work along this line is being conducted with aerial photos and various types of film.

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NUTRITION AND LAMB PRODUCTION

Feeding-breeding trials conducted at the Hopland Field Station suggest that ewes fed a supplement of energy-producing nutrients will produce more lambs than ewes grazing on normal range forage. Work along this line continues in connection with other experiments aimed at evaluating the nutritional value of natural feeds available on the range.

•

FUNGICIDES HELP ASPARAGUS PLANTS

Tests with three different fungicides on asparagus plant crowns show promise of reducing crown rot disease during the first two years of life of new plantings.

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APRICOT HARVESTING

Mechanical harvesting of apricots is often hampered by variations in fruit maturity from tree to tree. Engineers at Davis are working on a procedure whereby trees bearing suitably mature fruit are tagged prior to harvest, and only those trees are shaken. This process is repeated until the entire orchard has been harvested.