

ORGANIC PEST MANAEMENT

Organic pest management discourages the use of chemicals in controlling pest. Anything done on organic agriculture helps in the management of pests and diseases.

Organic agriculture saves the use of money for health reasons. Organic agriculture don't destroy, they keep anything that mimic the natural system e.g Wall gecko, toad, spider etc are very useful in organic system. The populations of this organism are enhanced for their better growth and productivity.

Organic system is supposed to give better yield, while it is not so in traditional farming. Soil fertility is destroyed in traditional system while organic systems enhance soil fertility. Organic system is not conscious about pests and disease management but what to do to enhance them. Organic pest management (OPM) emphasizes on improved biodiversity.

In organic crop production system, Organic Pest and Disease Management is essentially concerned with the knowledge and understanding of the reason why plants are threatened by pest organism. On this basis, a local organic pest method or strategy are embarked upon to correct or minimize the underlying factor towards reducing the overall effect of organisms on the crop.

In organic system, it is important to look at pests and diseases in a balanced way, i.e, you must accept or recognise that you have to share your crop with some of these organisms. You must not think about the pests alone but also the condition of the grain.

OPM is not just about excluding or avoiding the use of synthetic pesticide and chemicals, it is not just about botanical or plant extracts but rather, it is a wholistic approach and ecological concept that ensures that nothing is wasted on the farm. The implication here is that OPM is based on waste recycling that enhanced bio-diversity. Consequently, in a standard organic farm, pest control is not a priority. Organic farmers do not bother themselves about pests and diseases because organic pesticides are effective against them since organic crop appears to be:

- More resistant or tolerant
- Vigorous
- Low insoluble N and AA
- Thicker cell wall

Practical Tips

1. In organic system, we tolerate higher densities of weeds because:
 - a. Conserve/encourage rare species
 - b. Encourage host to beneficial organism or natural organisms

c. Serve as trap for pests and diseases

2. **Tolerant:** You can also tolerate a few pest because it is an essential part of organic system that serve as natural means that pest and crop of other organisms exist harmoniously in a healthy ecosystem. Therefore, in a well established farm, pest exists but not at a disastrous magnitude. Pest must be allowed to take a little of our crop but the rule of thumb is to grow healthy and vigorous plant that cannot be completely destroyed by the pest.

3. **Survival of fittest:** The practical thing to do to a particular plot where plants continued to be plagued by pest is to leave it, if it survives, it is good for us and if not, replace with another crop. For instance, in a plot of tomato, if it is observed that all but some plants are being destroyed by pests and diseases, just allow the survivor to get to seeds and use such seeds to grow, and next season, crop. This is a natural way of allowing better and well adapted varieties to evolve and will at the long run enhance population of plants that are the fittest.

4. **Planting Pattern:** This is important to pest and diseases management. Cop diversity through mixture should be encouraged rather than monoculture that will enhance easy spread. Staggered planting should also be embarked upon to confuse or kill the pests and to support predators.

Bio-diversity will mimic natural ecosystem. Different foliage system of the crop makes it difficult for the pest to zero on susceptible crops.