

# Contents

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Preface.....           | xv  |
| About the Author ..... | xxi |

## **SECTION I Introduction and Basic Principles**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Chapter 1</b> Introduction .....  | 3  |
| 1.1 Management Requirements .....  | 3  |
| 1.2 Productivity Factors.....  | 3  |
| 1.3 Climatic Factors .....   | 3  |
| 1.4 Moving Up the Yield Scale .....  | 4  |
| 1.5 Product Quality .....  | 4  |
| <b>Chapter 2</b> Soil Fertility Principles .....                                       | 5  |
| 2.1 Fertile Soil Defined .....   | 5  |
| 2.2 Making and Keeping a Soil Fertile .....  | 6  |
| 2.3 Biological Factors .....   | 6  |
| 2.4 An Ideal Soil.....   | 7  |
| 2.5 Soil Fertility Management Concepts.....  | 7  |
| 2.6 Multiple Factor Yield Influence.....   | 8  |
| 2.7 Soil Condition Related to Deficiency in a Major Element<br>and Micronutrient ..... | 9  |
| 2.7.1 Major Elements .....   | 9  |
| 2.7.2 Micronutrients .....   | 10 |
| 2.8 Elemental Content of the Soil and Soil Solution .....                              | 11 |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> Plant Nutrition Principles .....                                      | 15 |
| 3.1 Photosynthesis .....   | 15 |
| 3.2 The Function of Plants.....  | 17 |
| 3.3 Determination of Essentiality.....   | 17 |
| 3.4 Essential Element Content in Plants.....   | 19 |
| 3.5 Classification of the Thirteen Essential Mineral Elements.....                     | 21 |
| 3.6 Role of the Essential Plant Nutrient Elements.....                                 | 21 |
| 3.7 Plant Nutrient Element Sources.....  | 22 |
| 3.8 Element Absorption and Translocation .....   | 25 |
| 3.9 Elemental Accumulation .....   | 27 |
| 3.10 Element Absorption and Plant Genetics.....  | 27 |
| 3.11 Plant Nitrogen Fixation .....   | 27 |

|                  |  |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| 3.12             | Diagnostic Plant Symptoms of Essential Plant Nutrient Element Insufficiencies..... | 28        |
| <b>Chapter 4</b> | <b>The Plant Root.....</b>   | <b>33</b> |
| 4.1              | Introduction .....   | 33        |
| 4.2              | Root Function .....  | 34        |
| 4.3              | Root Hairs.....  | 34        |
| 4.4              | Lateral Roots .....  | 34        |
| 4.5              | The Rhizosphere.....   | 35        |
| 4.6              | Root Ion Absorption .....  | 35        |
| 4.7              | Root Crops.....  | 36        |
| <b>Chapter 5</b> | <b>How to Be a Diagnostician.....</b>  | <b>37</b> |
| 5.1              | The Diagnostic Approach.....   | 37        |
| 5.2              | Being a Diagnostician.....   | 37        |
| 5.3              | Diagnostic Factors .....   | 38        |
| 5.4              | Evaluating Diagnostic Procedures .....   | 39        |
| 5.5              | Scouting .....   | 40        |
| 5.6              | Weather Conditions .....   | 40        |
| 5.7              | Factors Affecting Essential Nutrient Element Concentrations in Plants .....        | 40        |
| 5.8              | Plant (Crop) Wilting .....   | 40        |
| 5.9              | Summary .....  | 41        |
| 5.10             | Certified Crop Advisor Programs.....   | 41        |

## **SECTION II** *Physical and Physiochemical Characteristics of Soil*

|                  |  |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 6</b> | <b>Soil Taxonomy, Horizontal Characteristics, and Clay Minerals.....</b> | <b>45</b> |
| 6.1              | Soil Orders (U.S. System of Soil Taxonomy) .....                         | 45        |
| 6.2              | Designations for Soil Horizons and Layers.....                           | 46        |
| <b>Chapter 7</b> | <b>Physical Properties of Soils.....</b>                                 | <b>49</b> |
| 7.1              | Textural Classification .....  | 49        |
| 7.2              | Soil Separates or Primary Soil Separates.....                            | 49        |
| 7.3              | Soil Separate Properties .....   | 51        |
| 7.4              | Soil Texture Characterization Definitions .....                          | 51        |
| 7.5              | Soil Structure.....  | 51        |
| 7.6              | Tillage Practices .....  | 52        |
| 7.7              | Water-Holding Capacity .....   | 52        |

|                   |  |    |
|-------------------|--|----|
| <b>Chapter 8</b>  | Physiochemical Properties of Soil.....   | 53 |
| 8.1               | Soil Separate Properties .....   | 53 |
| 8.2               | Major Phyllosilicate Minerals in Soils .....   | 53 |
| 8.3               | Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) of a Soil Based<br>on Texture.....                                | 54 |
| 8.4               | Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) Determination<br>of a Soil.....                                   | 55 |
| 8.5               | Anion Exchange Capacity .....  | 55 |
| <b>Chapter 9</b>  | Soil pH: Its Determination and Interpretation .....  | 57 |
| 9.1               | Definitions .....  | 57 |
| 9.2               | Causes of Soil Acidity .....   | 57 |
| 9.3               | Water pH Determination of Mineral Soil, Organic Soil,<br>and Organic Soilless Rooting Media..... | 58 |
| 9.4               | pH Determination Using a Calibrated pH Meter .....   | 59 |
| 9.5               | Another Soil pH Determination Procedure.....   | 59 |
| 9.6               | Salt pH Determination for a Mineral Soil.....  | 60 |
| 9.7               | pH Interpretation: Mineral Soil.....   | 60 |
| 9.8               | pH Interpretation: Organic Soils .....   | 60 |
| 9.9               | pH Interpretation: Organic Soilless Medium .....   | 60 |
| 9.10              | Soil pH Constancy .....  | 61 |
| 9.11              | Plant Root Function .....  | 63 |
| 9.12              | Soil Acidity and NPK Fertilizer Efficiency.....  | 63 |
| 9.13              | Soil pH Effect on Elemental Availability and/or Soil<br>Solution Composition .....               | 63 |
| 9.14              | Soil Buffer pH .....   | 64 |
| 9.15              | pH Determination of Water.....   | 64 |
| <b>Chapter 10</b> | Soil Organic Matter.....   | 65 |
| 10.1              | Definitions of Soil Organic Matter and Its Components.....                                       | 65 |
| 10.1.1            | Definitions .....  | 65 |
| 10.2              | Humus.....   | 66 |
| 10.3              | Soil Organic Matter Characteristics .....  | 67 |
| 10.3.1            | Physical Characteristics .....   | 67 |
| 10.3.2            | Physicochemical Characteristics .....  | 67 |
| 10.3.3            | Biological Characteristics .....   | 67 |
| 10.3.4            | Sources of Soil Organic Matter.....  | 67 |
| 10.3.5            | Content .....  | 67 |
| 10.4              | Methods of Soil Organic Matter Determination .....   | 67 |
| 10.5              | Management Requirements for High Organic Matter<br>Content Soils.....                            | 68 |
| 10.6              | Adverse Effects of Organic Matter Additions.....   | 68 |

## **SECTION III Plant Elemental Requirements and Associated Elements**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Chapter 11</b> Major Essential Plant Elements.....                 | 71  |
| 11.1 Terminology .....  | 71  |
| 11.2 Methods of Expression .....                                      | 71  |
| 11.3 Established Date for Essentiality/Researchers .....              | 72  |
| 11.4 Carbon, Hydrogen, and Oxygen .....                               | 72  |
| 11.5 Major Essential Element Properties .....                         | 72  |
| 11.5.1 Nitrogen (N).....  | 72  |
| 11.5.2 Phosphorus (P) .....   | 74  |
| 11.5.3 Potassium (K).....   | 76  |
| 11.5.4 Calcium (Ca).....  | 78  |
| 11.5.5 Magnesium (Mg).....  | 79  |
| 11.5.6 Sulfur (S).....  | 81  |
| <b>Chapter 12</b> Micronutrients Considered Essential to Plants ..... | 83  |
| 12.1 Terminology .....  | 83  |
| 12.2 Established Date for Essentiality/Researchers .....              | 83  |
| 12.3 Content and Function .....                                       | 84  |
| 12.4 Soil and Plant Species Associations .....                        | 84  |
| 12.5 Micronutrient Characteristics.....                               | 85  |
| 12.6 Micronutrient Properties .....                                   | 85  |
| 12.6.1 Boron (B).....   | 85  |
| 12.6.2 Chlorine (Cl).....   | 88  |
| 12.6.3 Copper (Cu) .....  | 89  |
| 12.6.4 Iron (Fe).....   | 91  |
| 12.6.5 Manganese (Mn) .....   | 93  |
| 12.6.6 Molybdenum (Mo).....   | 94  |
| 12.6.7 Zinc (Zn).....   | 96  |
| 12.7 Possible Additional Essential Micronutrients.....                | 97  |
| 12.7.1 Nickel (Ni).....   | 97  |
| 12.7.2 Silicon (Si).....  | 98  |
| <b>Chapter 13</b> Elements Considered Beneficial to Plants.....       | 99  |
| 13.1 The A to Z Nutrient Solution.....                                | 99  |
| 13.2 Elements Essential for Animals .....                             | 99  |
| 13.3 Basis for Essentiality for Beneficial Elements.....              | 100 |
| 13.4 Potential Essential Elements.....                                | 102 |
| 13.4.1 Cobalt (Co) .....  | 102 |
| 13.4.2 Silicon (Si).....  | 103 |
| 13.4.3 Nickel (Ni).....   | 103 |
| 13.5 New Beneficial Elements.....                                     | 104 |

|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
| 13.6   | Element Substitution.....                       | 104        |
| 13.7   | Form of Response.....                           | 104        |
| 13.8   | Summary.....                                    | 106        |
| <b>Chapter 14</b>  | <b>Elements Considered Toxic to Plants.....</b> | <b>109</b> |
| 14.1   | Introduction.....                               | 109        |
| 14.2   | The Nature of Elemental Toxicity.....           | 110        |
| 14.3   | Aluminum and Copper Toxicity.....               | 110        |
| 14.4   | Other Elements.....                             | 111        |
| 14.5   | Plant Species Factor.....                       | 111        |
| 14.6   | The Heavy Metals.....                           | 112        |
| <b>Chapter 15</b>  | <b>Trace Elements Found in Plants.....</b>      | <b>113</b> |
| 15.1   | Definition.....                                 | 113        |
| 15.2   | Elements Categorized as Trace Elements.....     | 113        |
| 15.3   | High Soil Content Elements.....                 | 115        |
| 15.4   | Availability Factors.....                       | 115        |
| 15.5   | Accumulator Plants and Elements.....            | 116        |
| 15.6   | Symbiotic Element.....                          | 116        |
| <br><b>SECTION IV    <i>Methods of Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition Assessment</i></b> |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 16</b>  | <b>Soil Testing.....</b>                        | <b>119</b> |
| 16.1   | Purposes.....                                   | 119        |
| 16.2   | Field Sampling.....                             | 119        |
| 16.2.1   | Best Time to Soil Sample.....                   | 120        |
| 16.2.2   | Subsoil Sampling.....                           | 121        |
| 16.2.3   | Soil Preparation for Laboratory Submission..... | 121        |
| 16.3   | Soil Laboratory Selection.....                  | 121        |
| 16.4   | Laboratory Soil Testing Procedures.....         | 122        |
| 16.5   | Interpretation of a Soil Test Result.....       | 122        |
| 16.5.1   | Word Designation.....                           | 123        |
| 16.5.2   | Critical Values.....                            | 124        |
| 16.5.3   | Ratio Concept of Soil Interpretation.....       | 125        |
| 16.6   | Soil Test Result Tracking (Monitoring).....     | 125        |
| 16.7   | Liming and Fertilizer Use Strategies.....       | 125        |
| <b>Chapter 17</b>  | <b>Plant Analysis and Tissue Testing.....</b>   | <b>127</b> |
| 17.1   | Plant Analysis Objectives.....                  | 127        |
| 17.2   | Sequence of Procedures.....                     | 127        |

|        |   |     |
|--------|---|-----|
| 17.3   | Sampling Techniques.....  | 128 |
| 17.3.1 | When to Sample .....  | 129 |
| 17.3.2 | Number of Samples and Plants to Sample .....                        | 129 |
| 17.3.3 | Lack of Homogeneity .....   | 129 |
| 17.3.4 | Petioles .....  | 130 |
| 17.3.5 | Comparative Plant Tissue Samples .....                              | 130 |
| 17.3.6 | What Not to Sample .....  | 130 |
| 17.3.7 | Collecting a Soil Sample .....                                      | 131 |
| 17.4   | Plant Tissue Handling, Preparation, and Analysis .....              | 131 |
| 17.4.1 | Dry Weight Preservation .....                                       | 131 |
| 17.4.2 | Sources of Contamination .....                                      | 132 |
| 17.4.3 | Decontamination .....   | 132 |
| 17.4.5 | Elemental Analysis Procedures.....                                  | 133 |
| 17.4.6 | Elemental Content .....   | 133 |
| 17.4.7 | Expression of Analytical Results .....                              | 133 |
| 17.5   | Methods of Interpretation.....                                      | 134 |
| 17.5.1 | Critical Values .....   | 135 |
| 17.5.2 | Standard Values.....  | 136 |
| 17.5.3 | Sufficiency Range.....  | 136 |
| 17.5.4 | Expected Elemental Content Range in Plant Tissue.....               | 138 |
| 17.5.5 | Excessive or Toxic Concentrations.....                              | 138 |
| 17.5.6 | Diagnosis and Recommendation Integrated System (DRIS) .....         | 138 |
| 17.6   | Word Classification of Elemental Concentrations.....                | 139 |
| 17.7   | Plant Analysis as a Diagnostic Technique.....                       | 140 |
| 17.8   | Experience Required .....   | 141 |
| 17.9   | Data Logging/Tracking of Plant Analyses .....                       | 141 |
| 17.10  | Utilization of Plant Analyses for Nutrient Element Management ..... | 141 |
| 17.11  | Tissue Testing .....  | 142 |
| 17.12  | Indirect Evaluation Procedures .....                                | 143 |

## **SECTION V** *Amendments for Soil Fertility Maintenance*

|                   |  |     |
|-------------------|--|-----|
| <b>Chapter 18</b> | Lime and Liming Materials .....                                      | 147 |
| 18.1              | Liming Terms .....   | 147 |
| 18.2              | Liming Materials.....  | 148 |
| 18.3              | Liming Materials and Their Calcium Carbonate Equivalents (CCEs)..... | 149 |
| 18.4              | Mesh Size .....  | 151 |
| 18.5              | Quality Factor Designation .....                                     | 152 |
| 18.6              | Lime Requirement (LR) .....  | 152 |

|                   |   |            |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| 18.7              | Soil Test Ratio of Ca to Mg Determines Form of Limestone to Apply ..... | 153        |
| 18.8              | Liming Rate Determined by Acidifying Effect of Fertilizer .....         | 153        |
| 18.9              | Lime Shock.....   | 154        |
| 18.10             | Lime Incorporation.....   | 154        |
| 18.11             | Depth of Incorporation.....   | 154        |
| 18.12             | Subsoil pH .....  | 155        |
| <b>Chapter 19</b> | <b>Inorganic Chemical Fertilizers and Their Properties .....</b>        | <b>157</b> |
| 19.1              | Definitions .....   | 157        |
| 19.2              | Fertilizer Terminology .....  | 157        |
| 19.3              | Characteristics of the Major Elements as Fertilizer.....                | 160        |
| 19.4              | Conversion Factors for the Major Essential Fertilizer Elements .....    | 160        |
| 19.5              | Characteristics of the Micronutrients as Fertilizer.....                | 164        |
| 19.6              | The Physical and Chemical Properties of Fertilizers.....                | 165        |
| 19.6.1            | Inorganic .....   | 165        |
| 19.6.2            | Fertilizer Factors .....  | 165        |
| 19.6.3            | Soil Factors.....   | 166        |
| 19.7              | Naturally Occurring Inorganic Fertilizers .....                         | 167        |
| 19.7.1            | Rock Phosphate .....  | 167        |
| 19.7.2            | Potassium Chloride (KCl) and Potassium Sulfate ( $K_2SO_4$ ).....       | 167        |
| 19.7.3            | Limestone .....   | 167        |
| <b>Chapter 20</b> | <b>Organic Fertilizers and Their Properties .....</b>                   | <b>169</b> |
| 20.1              | Value.....  | 169        |
| 20.2              | Composted Animal Manures .....  | 169        |
| 20.3              | Animal Manure Major Element Composition.....                            | 169        |
| 20.4              | Other Organic Materials.....  | 170        |
| 20.5              | Soil and Plant Factors.....   | 171        |
| <b>Chapter 21</b> | <b>Fertilizer Placement .....</b>                                       | <b>173</b> |
| 21.1              | Objectives .....  | 173        |
| 21.2              | Methods of Fertilizer Placement .....                                   | 174        |
| 21.2.1            | Banding .....   | 174        |
| 21.2.2            | Surface Strip or Dribble Banding.....                                   | 174        |
| 21.2.3            | Deep Banding.....   | 174        |
| 21.2.4            | High Pressure Injection .....   | 175        |
| 21.2.5            | Point Injection of Fluids .....   | 175        |
| 21.2.6            | Point Placement of Solids.....  | 175        |
| 21.2.7            | Starter .....   | 175        |

|                   |  |            |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| 21.2.8            | Sidedressing.....  | 175        |
| 21.2.9            | Fertigation .....  | 175        |
| 21.2.10           | Foliar Fertilization .....   | 176        |
| <b>Chapter 22</b> | <b>Soil Water, Irrigation, and Water Quality .....</b>                   | <b>179</b> |
| 22.1              | Soil Water Terminology .....   | 179        |
| 22.2              | Soil Factors Affecting Soil Water-Holding Capacity and<br>Movement ..... | 180        |
| 22.3              | Drainage .....   | 181        |
| 22.4              | Irrigation Methods.....  | 182        |
| 22.5              | Irrigation Water Quality .....   | 183        |
| 22.6              | Water Treatment Procedures .....   | 184        |
| 22.7              | What Is Water? .....   | 185        |

## **SECTION VI** *Methods of Soilless Plant Production*

|                   |   |            |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Chapter 23</b> | <b>Hydroponics .....</b>  | <b>189</b> |
| 23.1              | Hydroponics Defined.....  | 189        |
| 23.2              | Historical Events.....  | 189        |
| 23.3              | Hydroponic Techniques.....  | 190        |
| 23.4              | Hydroponic Growing Systems.....   | 190        |
| 23.4.1            | Systems Without the Use of a Rooting Medium .....                         | 191        |
| 23.4.2            | Systems With the Use of a Rooting Medium .....                            | 193        |
| 23.5              | Rooting Media.....  | 196        |
| 23.6              | Water Quality .....   | 196        |
| 23.7              | The Nutrient Solution .....   | 198        |
| 23.7.1            | Elemental Content.....  | 198        |
| 23.7.2            | Elemental Forms .....   | 198        |
| 23.7.3            | Concentration Ranges and Ratios .....                                     | 200        |
| 23.7.4            | Nitrate and Ammonium .....  | 200        |
| 23.7.5            | Beneficial Elements.....  | 201        |
| 23.7.6            | Chelates .....  | 201        |
| 23.7.7            | Nutrient Solution/Water Temperature .....                                 | 202        |
| 23.7.8            | pH and Electrical Conductivity (EC) .....                                 | 203        |
| 23.7.9            | Other Factors.....  | 203        |
| 23.7.10           | Nutrient Solution Elemental Content<br>Determination and Monitoring ..... | 204        |
| 23.7.11           | Use Factors .....   | 204        |
| 23.8              | Reagents and Nutrient Solution Formulations.....                          | 204        |
| 23.9              | Concentration Ranges and Ratios.....                                      | 206        |
| 23.10             | pH Interpretation-Hydroponic Nutrient Solution .....                      | 206        |
| 23.11             | Reconstitution of the Nutrient Solution .....                             | 207        |
| 23.12             | Accumulation of Nutrient Elements and Precipitates .....                  | 207        |

|                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Chapter 24</b> | Soilless Rooting Growing Media .....                                  | 209 |
| 24.1              | Soilless Media Ingredients .....                                      | 209 |
| 24.2              | Soilless Media Formulations .....                                     | 211 |
| 24.3              | Physical Properties .....   | 213 |
| 24.4              | Physiochemical Properties .....                                       | 213 |
| 24.5              | Control of pH.....  | 213 |
| 24.6              | Use Formulations.....   | 213 |
| 24.7              | Bag Culture Systems .....   | 213 |
| 24.8              | Fertility Determination Procedure for an Organic<br>Soilless Mix..... | 215 |

## **SECTION VII** *Miscellaneous*

|                   |  |     |
|-------------------|--|-----|
| <b>Chapter 25</b> | Organic Farming/Gardening.....                       | 219 |
| 25.1              | Chemicalization of Crop Production.....              | 219 |
| 25.2              | "Organically Grown" Defined.....                     | 220 |
| 25.3              | Suitable Inorganic Fertilizers .....                 | 220 |
| 25.4              | Suitable Organic Fertilizers.....                    | 221 |
| 25.5              | Organic Soil Fertility Management.....               | 222 |
| 25.6              | Soil Physical Properties.....                        | 222 |
| 25.7              | Food Safety and Quality Issues .....                 | 222 |
| <b>Chapter 26</b> | Weather and Climatic Conditions .....                | 223 |
| 26.1              | Definitions .....                                    | 223 |
| 26.2              | Climatic Factors .....                               | 224 |
| 26.2.1            | Air Temperature .....                                | 224 |
| 26.2.2            | Rainfall.....  | 224 |
| 26.2.3            | Wind .....   | 225 |
| 26.2.4            | Solar Radiation Intensity and Duration.....          | 225 |
| 26.2.5            | Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ).....               | 226 |
| 26.3              | Weather as a Diagnostic Factor .....                 | 226 |
| <b>Chapter 27</b> | Best Management Practices (BMPs).....                | 229 |
| 27.1              | Origin .....   | 229 |
| 27.2              | Best Management Practice Application Broadened ..... | 229 |
| 27.3              | Best Practice .....                                  | 230 |
| 27.4              | Important Protocol Considerations .....              | 230 |
| 27.5              | Precision Farming .....                              | 231 |

## APPENDICES

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Appendix A: Glossary</b> .....  | 235 |
| <b>Appendix B: Formulation and Use of Soil Extraction Reagents</b> ..... | 251 |
| B.1 Historical Background.....   | 251 |
| B.2 Extraction Reagents.....   | 252 |
| B.3 Soil Sample Preparation .....  | 253 |
| B.4 Extraction Reagent Formulations and Use .....                        | 253 |
| B.5 Extraction Procedures for the Micronutrients .....                   | 255 |
| <b>Appendix C: Preparation Procedures and Elemental Content</b>          |     |
| <b>Determination for Plant Tissue</b> .....                              | 257 |
| C.1 Plant Tissue Preparation Procedures .....                            | 257 |
| C.1.1 Moisture Removal .....   | 257 |
| C.1.2 Particle Size Reduction .....                                      | 257 |
| C.1.3 Organic Matter Destruction .....                                   | 258 |
| C.2 Elemental Content Determinations .....                               | 259 |
| C.3 Tissue Testing Extraction Procedures .....                           | 259 |
| <b>Appendix D: Weights and Measures</b> .....                            | 261 |
| Metric Conversion Chart .....  | 261 |
| Equivalent GFS Package Sizes (not exact conversions).....                | 261 |
| Units of Length and Area .....   | 261 |
| Units of Capacity .....  | 262 |
| Units of Liquid Measure.....   | 262 |
| Temperature Conversions .....  | 262 |
| Liquid Measure.....  | 263 |
| Length of Row per Acre at Various Row Spacings .....                     | 263 |
| Number of Plants per Acre at Various Spacings.....                       | 263 |
| Length of Row per Acre at Various Row Spacings .....                     | 264 |
| Number of Plants per Acre at Various Spacings.....                       | 265 |
| <b>Reference Books and Texts</b> .....                                   | 267 |
| <b>References</b> .....  | 271 |
| <b>Index</b> .....   | 275 |