

# FUMIGATION OF NURSERY SOIL WITH METHYL BROMIDE

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Results of a recent experiment have shown that methyl bromide (MB) is better than DD for fumigation of nursery soil. Not only did MB give better control of the root-lesion eelworm, *Pratylenchus loosi*, but percentage rooting was higher and growth of cuttings better. Details of the method are given below :

- 1 — Prepare your nursery soil in the normal way.
- 2 — Add soil to bags (open at both ends) and place them on nursery beds.
- 3 — Dig a six inch deep trench around each bed.
- 4 — Cover bags and bed with polythene sheeting which should be 2 or 3 inches above the top of the bags to allow free movement of the fumigant.
- 5 — Place the edges of the polythene sheet in the trench and cover with soil.
- 6 — Fumigate area under polythene with MB at the rate of **2 lb per 100 sq ft.**
- 7 — Remove polythene after 48 hours.
- 8 — Plant cuttings 48 hours later.

The main advantages of the treatment are : (1) better control of eelworms, (2) very little delay between fumigation and planting and (3) soil storage is not necessary. The cost of treatment is approximately twice that of DD fumigation but is less than one cent a bag.

Methyl bromide is sold in one pound sealed cans and can only be released by using a special applicator supplied with the tins. The applicator consists of a metal clip which fits around the can, and a handle. When the handle is pulled the can is pierced and the MB released into a plastic tube, the other end of which opens under the polythene sheet. Placing the can in hot water greatly speeds up the release of MB.

**Methyl bromide is very poisonous and should be used only if it contains 2% chloropicrin (tear gas) as a warning agent.** MB has been used extensively for the control of *Poria* root disease and the only danger encountered has been a tendency for the plastic tube attached to the applicator to split. If this happens, drop the can and move away from the fumigant. If MB comes in contact with skin, the affected part should be immediately and thoroughly washed with water. Empty cans should be buried.