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Entomopathogenic fungi as holistic tools in crop production and protection

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Entomopathogenic fungi such as *Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium brunneum* and *Isaria fumosorosea* are traditionally used in crop protection to manage arthropod pests. However, recent studies show that their interaction with plants as mycorrhizae and endophytes allows them to play a bigger role in crop production. Improved plant growth, plant health, biomass and protection from plant diseases are additional contributions of entomopathogenic fungi. Entomopathogenic fungi might also help with conservation of nutrients and moisture through improved absorption. Understanding the plant-entomopathogen-arthropod interactions and exploring their potential for overall plant health contributes to sustainable pest management.

Biography

Surendra Dara obtained his PhD in Entomology from Virginia Tech. He specializes in entomopathology and focuses his research on providing IPM solutions for strawberries, vegetables and other crops in California. He authored or co-authored more than 200 publications that include extension articles, journal articles, book chapters and manuals. He holds offices at the Society of Invertebrate Pathology and Entomological Society of America Pacific Branch. He is the Vice-Chair of National Working Group on Microbial Control of Arthropod Pests, Chair of the Strawberry Work Group and a Member of the Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiative at University of California.

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