

The possible benefits of bituminous mulches have been recognised for the last fifty years, but little work has been carried out to determine their effects on the soil-plant complex.

Recently, several petroleum refining companies have developed petroleum resin mulches which are similar to bitumen. They are more easily handled than conventional mulches and may overcome limitations in respect of cost, availability and application. Most of the work in this field has been conducted in temperate regions.

A study of one such commercial formulation was made to determine its effects under tropical conditions. In Trinidad, tropical, torrential rainfall is experienced regularly and has an extremely deleterious effect on the soil. Crusting and panning of the soil occur rapidly with results which are mentioned elsewhere in this report. A cheap and effective way of reducing this effect would be most beneficial to the production of vegetable crops.

A careful search of the literature showed how little attention has been given to bituminous mulches.