B - 14 **PROCEDURES FOR ACCURATE DETERMINATION OF SOME TRACE METAL CONTENTS IN *HEVEA* LEAVES**

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To study some physiological disorders in *Hevea*, the amounts of trace metals present in different tissues must be known accurately. The destruction of organic matter in a powdered leaf sample was done by the following methods : (1) Wet ashing using H_2SO_4—Se—H_2O_2 ; (2) Wet ashing using $HClO_4$: HNO_3 ; (3) Dry ashing with or without adding ashing aids.

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Ca, Mg, Mn, Zn, Cu, Fe contents were determined by flame atomic absorption spectrometry.

The optimum conditions for destruction of organic matter, to recover the highest amount of each trace metal were worked out by performing factorially laid experiments to study the effects of relevant variables and their interactions.

Chemical and physical properties of the elements are used to explain the findings.