

8 - 21 **OPTIMUM CONDITIONS FOR DESTRUCTION OF ORGANIC MATTER IN HEVEA TISSUES
FOR SIMULTANEOUS DETERMINATION OF N, P and K CONTENTS**

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The accurate determination of N, P and K contents in Hevea tissues such as leaves and latex is important for the study of mineral nutrition of Hevea. The analytical values often depend on the method and conditions used for the destruction of organic matter in these tissues.

The reagents and reaction conditions should be selected in such a way that extraction of nutrients is efficient but the matrix effects and the interference from reagent on analytical determinations are minimal. H_2SO_4 -Se- H_2O_2 mixture was used as the reagent. A factorially laid experiment was performed using powdered Hevea leaves. The variables were : (i) Composition of acid mixture (4 different acid mixtures), (ii) Digestion Temperature (3 temperatures), (iii) Digestion period (3 different decomposition times).

The experiment was done in triplicate. Using a Technicon Auto Analyzer N and P contents were determined by colorimetric methods and K contents by flame emission spectrometry. The optimum conditions for the destruction of organic matter have been worked out.