

A TECHNIQUE FOR STUDYING THE MICRODISTRIBUTION OF NEMATODES
IN UNDISTURBED SOIL

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The geographical distribution of nematodes within countries and macrodistribution of nematodes within fields and experimental plots has been extensively studied (Barker & Nusbaum, 1971; Heath, Brown & Boag, 1976). The microdistribution of nematodes

on 150 mm diameter diamond-impregnated bronze lapping plates (240 and 320 diamond grit size) mounted on a modified Cutrock LMS200 lapping machine (Robertson & Normington, 1976).

Following ultrasonic cleaning the prepared slices



Nematodes were readily identified when cut obliquely or along their longitudinal axis so that some of their internal organs could be recognised (Fig. 1A). Other nematodes cut in cross section often had their internal organs missing but could still be identified due to the general appearance of the cuticle and its circular form with a diameter corresponding to that of nematodes. In certain situations the width of the nematode annules could be measured and anastomoses observed in the lateral line (Fig. 1D).

This technique could be used to identify the ecological niche occupied by nematodes in different soil types and may help explain why different nematodes species appear to vary in their susceptibility to certain nematicides (Boag, 1979).

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