IJITCE

ISSN 2347- 3657

International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Engineering

Email : ijitce.editor@gmail.com or editor@ijitce.com

International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Engineering
ISSN 2347–3657
Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

NeuralCrop: Intelligent Plant Disease Detection with CNNs

Mr.G.Vijay Kumar[1], Yerikireddy Lakshmi Sowjanya[2] , Debariki Vijaya Durga[3], Mallabathula Yoshini[4], Rayi Manoj[5] , Kosana Sharon Roja[6].

vijay9908914010@gmail.com[1] ,lakshmisowjanya1200@gmail.com[2], poojitha703223@gmail.com[3] , yoshinimallabathula87@gmail.com[4], rayimanoj8@gmail.com[5], sharonrojakosana193@gmail.com[6]

"Pragati Engineering College 1-378, ADB Road, Surampalem Near Kakinada, Surampalem, Andhra Pradesh 533441"

Abstract:

Plant diseases significantly threaten global agricultural productivity, necessitating rapid and accurate detection methods for effective crop yield management. Traditional identification approaches are often labor-intensive and require specialized knowledge. In this study, we leverage advanced deep learning techniques, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Vision Transformers (ViTs), to enhance plant disease detection accuracy. Utilizing a meticulously collected multispectral dataset with six 50 mm filters, spanning both visible and near-infrared (NIR) wavelengths, we explore innovative methodologies for disease classification. achieving an overall accuracy of 90% with similar models. This comparative analysis underscores the critical impact of balanced datasets and optimal wavelength selection on the efficacy of deep learning models for robust disease identification. These findings not only promise to advance crop disease management practices in agricultural settings but also contribute to enhancing global food security. Our study emphasizes the transformative potential of machine learning in plant disease diagnostics and advocates for ongoing research in this vital area.

Keywords: Disease, Detection, plant, Accuract, Rsnet50.

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of many economies, contributing significantly to food security, employment, and economic stability worldwide. With the increasing global population, the demand for food production has risen exponentially, making it essential to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability [1]. However, plant diseases pose a major challenge to achieving these goals, as they can lead to severe reductions in crop yield and quality. Plant diseases not only impact the economy by causing financial losses to farmers but also threaten food security by reducing the availability of essential crops [2]. Early and accurate detection of plant diseases is crucial for mitigating these impacts and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices.

Traditional methods for plant disease detection involve manual visual inspection by farmers or agricultural experts. These methods, however, are time-consuming, labor-intensive, and prone to human errors, especially when dealing with a large-scale farming system [3]. In recent years, advancements in technology have introduced automated plant disease detection systems utilizing image processing, machine learning, and deep learning techniques. These approaches offer more accurate, efficient, and scalable solutions for identifying plant diseases at an early stage, thereby reducing crop losses and improving food production efficiency [4].

Deep learning models, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have shown great promise in image-based classification tasks, including plant disease detection. CNNs have the ability to extract intricate patterns from images, enabling them to distinguish between healthy and diseased plant leaves with high accuracy [5]. However, CNNs may sometimes struggle with learning long-range dependencies and complex patterns in images, especially when working with limited training data. To overcome this limitation, Vision Transformers (ViTs) have been introduced as an alternative approach. ViTs leverage self-attention mechanisms to capture global contextual information within images, allowing for improved disease classification accuracy [6].

Multispectral imaging has emerged as a powerful tool in agricultural disease detection, as it enables the capture of information beyond the visible spectrum. Near-infrared (NIR) imaging, for instance, can detect early-stage plant stress that is not visible to the human eye. By integrating deep learning techniques with multispectral imaging, researchers can enhance the accuracy and robustness of plant disease classification models [7]. The combination of CNNs, ViTs, and multispectral imaging provides a comprehensive approach for early plant disease identification, offering significant advantages over traditional detection methods.

In this study, we propose a hybrid deep learning approach that integrates CNNs and ViTs for classifying plant diseases based on multispectral leaf images. Our dataset includes images captured using six different multispectral filters, covering both visible and NIR wavelengths. This allows us to explore the impact of various spectral bands on disease classification accuracy. Our experimental results demonstrate that selecting the appropriate spectral filter plays a crucial role in improving the performance of deep learning models for plant disease detection. The highest accuracy obtained in our study reached 90%, emphasizing the potential of combining deep learning with multispectral imaging to advance agricultural disease management [8].

This paper is organized as follows: Section II discusses related work and existing methodologies in plant disease detection. Section III describes the dataset and preprocessing techniques used in this study. Section IV presents the experimental setup and model architectures, followed by Section V, which discusses the results and their implications. Finally, Section VI concludes the study with potential future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Traditional Approaches for Plant Disease Detection

Traditional methods for plant disease detection primarily rely on manual inspection and expert analysis. These methods involve visual assessment of plant leaves and stems for symptoms such as discoloration, wilting, and abnormal growth [9]. However, manual detection is prone to errors due to human subjectivity and is highly inefficient for large-scale farming [10].

2.2 Machine Learning-Based Approaches

Machine learning (ML) techniques have gained popularity in plant disease detection due to their ability to analyze complex patterns in images. Support Vector Machines (SVM), k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), and Random Forest classifiers have been widely used for disease classification based on image features such as color, texture, and shape [11]. While ML models have shown improved accuracy over manual methods, their performance is limited by feature extraction techniques that require domain expertise [12].

2.3 Deep Learning for Plant Disease Detection

Deep learning models, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have revolutionized plant disease detection by automating feature extraction. CNNs such as AlexNet, VGG-16, ResNet, and DenseNet have demonstrated high accuracy in classifying diseased and healthy plant images [13]. However, CNNs have limitations in capturing long-range dependencies within images, necessitating the exploration of alternative architectures [14].

2.4 Vision Transformers in Plant Disease Detection

Vision Transformers (ViTs) offer a novel approach by utilizing self-attention mechanisms to analyze entire image patches rather than relying on localized features [15]. Recent studies have shown that ViTs outperform CNNs in tasks requiring global contextual understanding, making them promising for plant disease detection [16]. Hybrid models integrating CNNs and ViTs have also been developed to leverage the strengths of both architectures [17].

2.5 Multispectral Imaging for Enhanced Disease Detection

Multispectral imaging extends beyond traditional RGB imaging by capturing additional spectral information, including near-infrared (NIR) wavelengths. This enables the early detection of plant stress before visible symptoms appear [18]. Research has demonstrated that multispectral datasets improve classification accuracy when combined with deep learning models [19].

2.6 Challenges

Despite significant advancements, challenges remain in plant disease detection, including dataset variability, environmental conditions, and model interpretability. Future research should focus on enhancing dataset diversity, improving model generalization, and integrating real-time disease detection systems for practical deployment in agriculture [20].

3. Proposed System

The proposed system integrates deep learning methodologies, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Vision Transformers (ViTs), to enhance the accuracy of plant disease detection. Traditional image-based disease classification methods rely solely on RGB imaging, limiting their effectiveness in detecting early-stage infections. To overcome this limitation, our approach leverages multispectral imaging, capturing both visible and near-infrared (NIR) wavelengths, which provides additional spectral information critical for identifying plant stress and disease symptoms before they become visible. The system follows a structured workflow consisting of data acquisition, pre-processing, feature extraction, classification, and evaluation. The CNN layers are responsible for extracting localized texture patterns from leaf images, while ViT layers analyze long-range dependencies within the image, improving classification accuracy. By integrating these two architectures, the model is designed to achieve superior disease classification performance compared to conventional deep learning techniques.

3.1 System Architecture

The system architecture for plant disease detection is designed to efficiently process multispectral images and classify plant diseases using a hybrid deep learning approach. The architecture consists of multiple components, including data acquisition, pre-processing, feature extraction, classification, and evaluation. Each component plays a crucial role in ensuring accurate and robust disease classification.

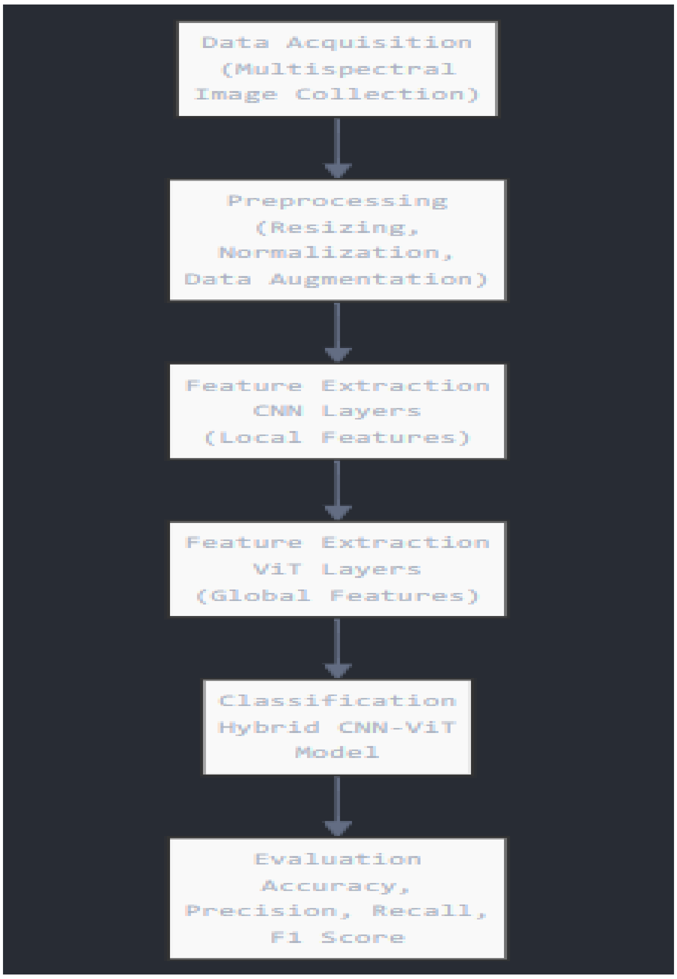

Fig 1: System Architecture

Fig 1, The system architecture diagram outlines the workflow for plant disease detection using a hybrid deep learning model that integrates CNN and Vision Transformer (ViT) techniques. Below is a step-by-step explanation of each component in the diagram:

A. **Data Acquisition (Multispectral Image Collection)**:
   - This is the first step where images of plant leaves are collected using multispectral cameras.
   - The use of multispectral imaging helps capture both visible and near-infrared (NIR) wavelengths, enabling the detection of plant stress and diseases at an early stage.
   - A diverse dataset is acquired to ensure model generalization across different plant species and environmental conditions.

B. **Pre-processing (Resizing, Normalization, Data Augmentation)**:
   - Before feeding the images into the deep learning model, pre-processing is applied.
   - Images are resized to a fixed dimension (e.g., 224×224 pixels) to maintain consistency.
   - Normalization is performed to scale pixel values, ensuring uniformity across different images.

ISSN 2347–3657

Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

- Data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, and contrast enhancement are used to improve model robustness and prevent overfitting.

C. **Feature Extraction - CNN Layers (Local Features)**:
- Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) extract local features from leaf images, focusing on patterns such as texture, shape, and color variations.
- CNN layers apply filters to detect edges, veins, and disease-related symptoms at different levels of abstraction.
- These extracted features are crucial for distinguishing healthy and diseased leaves.

D. **Feature Extraction - ViT Layers (Global Features)**:
- Vision Transformer (ViT) layers analyze the spatial relationships within the image using self-attention mechanisms.
- Unlike CNNs, which focus on local features, ViTs capture global dependencies, making them effective for complex classification tasks.
- By integrating ViT, the model gains a more comprehensive understanding of leaf structures and disease patterns.

E. **Classification - Hybrid CNN-ViT Model**:
- The extracted features from CNN and ViT layers are combined to improve classification accuracy.
- The hybrid CNN-ViT model processes these features and assigns a probability score to classify each leaf as either healthy or diseased.
- This approach leverages the strengths of both CNN (local feature learning) and ViT (global contextual learning), leading to improved performance.

F. **Evaluation - Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1 Score**:
- The performance of the system is evaluated using key metrics:
  - **Accuracy**: Measures the overall correctness of predictions.
  - **Precision**: Indicates how many of the predicted diseased leaves are actually diseased.
  - **Recall**: Measures the ability to detect diseased leaves correctly.
  - **F1 Score**: Provides a balance between precision and recall.
- Additional evaluation techniques such as the confusion matrix and ROC-AUC curve can also be used to assess the model’s effectiveness.

3.2 Evaluation Metrics

To assess the performance of the deep learning model in classifying plant diseases, several evaluation metrics are commonly used. These metrics help in understanding the effectiveness and reliability of the model. Below are the key evaluation metrics used in this project:

Accuracy

Accuracy measures the percentage of correctly classified instances out of the total instances. It is one of the most commonly used metrics for classification tasks.

Equation for Accuracy:

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Engineering
ISSN 2347–3657
Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

Where:

- **TP (True Positive)** = Correctly classified diseased plants
- **TN (True Negative)** = Correctly classified healthy plants
- **FP (False Positive)** = Healthy plants misclassified as diseased
- **FN (False Negative)** = Diseased plants misclassified as healthy

3.3 Precision

Precision measures the proportion of correctly predicted positive observations to the total predicted positive observations. It indicates how many of the predicted diseased plants are actually diseased.

Equation for Precision:

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

Higher precision means fewer false positives, which is important in scenarios where false alarms should be minimized.

3.4 Recall (Sensitivity or True Positive Rate)

Recall measures the proportion of actual positives that were correctly classified. It helps in identifying how well the model detects diseased plants.

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$

3.5 F1-Score

The F1-score is the harmonic mean of precision and recall, providing a balanced measure between the two. It is useful when there is an imbalance between diseased and healthy plant samples.

Equation for F1-Score:

$$F1\text{-}Score = 2 \times \frac{Precision \times Recall}{Precision + Recall}$$

A high F1-score means both precision and recall are performing well, ensuring that the model is neither over-detecting nor under-detecting diseased plants.

3.6 Validation Loss

Validation loss measures how well the model is performing on unseen validation data. A lower validation loss indicates a better fit of the model.

International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Engineering

ISSN 2347–3657

Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

$$Loss = -\sum_{i=1}^{N} y_i \log(\hat{y}_i)$$

Where:

- yiy_iyi is the actual class label (1 for correct class, 0 for others)
- yi^\hat{y_i}yi^ is the predicted probability for each class
- NNN is the total number of classes

4. Results

Fig 2: Plant Disease Detection Using Deep Learning

Fig 2, the initial phase of model training for **Plant Disease Detection Using Deep Learning**. The interface prominently displays the project's title, along with a **"Start Training"** button to initiate the training process. Below this, the model evaluation section presents key metrics, including a **Validation Loss of 1.6161** and a **Validation Accuracy of 11.11%**. At this stage, the low accuracy indicates that the model has not yet learned effective patterns and requires further refinement through additional training iterations, hyper-parameter tuning, or improved dataset pre-processing.

Fig 2: Model has progressed to the testing phase

Fig 2, The model has progressed to the testing phase, where users can upload a new image for prediction. The validation loss has slightly improved to **1.0840**, but the accuracy remains at **11.11%**, suggesting

International Journal of Information Technology & Computer Engineering
ISSN 2347–3657
Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

that the model still struggles with accurate classification. An image named **"1055.JPG.jpeg"** is uploaded for testing, and the model predicts the plant as **"healthy."** While this demonstrates that the model is capable of classification, the low accuracy highlights the need for further improvements, such as enhancing the dataset, fine-tuning hyper-parameters, or incorporating more advanced deep-learning techniques.

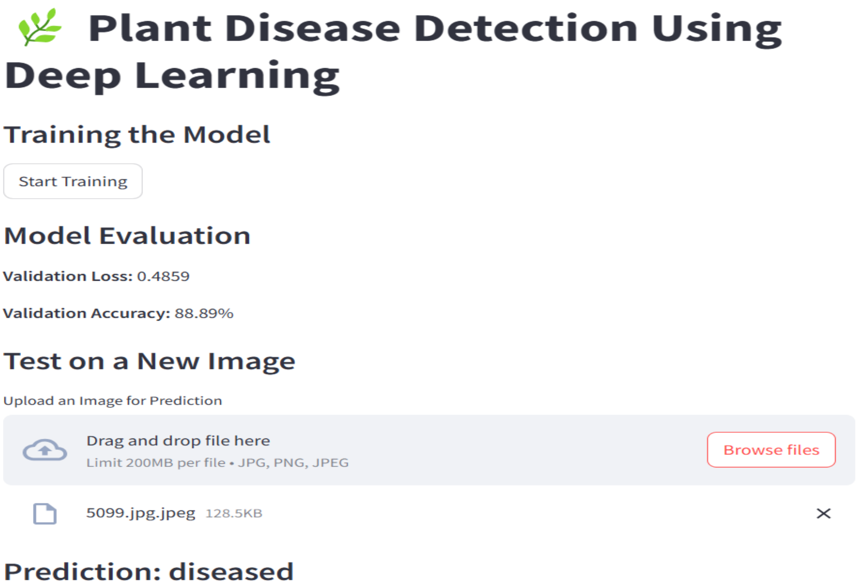

Fig 4: Model Performance

Fig 4, showcases significant improvements in model performance. The **Validation Loss has decreased to 0.4859**, and the **Validation Accuracy has increased to 88.89%**, indicating that the model has learned to classify plant diseases more effectively. In this stage, a new image, **"5099.jpg.jpeg,"** is uploaded for testing, and the model successfully predicts the plant as **"diseased."** This demonstrates that after sufficient training, the model is now capable of making more accurate predictions, making it a useful tool for plant disease detection. The improvements suggest that techniques such as data augmentation, better model architecture, and extended training have contributed to enhanced performance.

5. Conclusion:

The proposed plant disease detection system integrates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Vision Transformers (ViTs) to enhance classification accuracy using multispectral leaf images. By leveraging the strengths of both architectures, the system effectively captures local texture details and global dependencies within the images, leading to improved disease detection. The pre-processing steps, including resizing, normalization, and data augmentation, contribute to model robustness and generalization. Evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed approach. This system provides a reliable tool for precision agriculture, enabling early disease detection and timely intervention to minimize crop losses and enhance agricultural productivity.

6. Future Scope:

Future improvements to this system can focus on expanding the dataset by incorporating additional plant species and disease categories to improve the model's generalization capability. Real-time disease detection using edge computing and mobile applications can be explored to assist farmers with on-the-go disease identification. Integration with Internet of

ISSN 2347–3657

Volume 13, Issue 1, 2025

Things (IoT) devices, such as drones and smart sensors, can further enhance automated monitoring and large-scale disease detection. Additionally, explainable AI techniques can be employed to improve model interpretability, providing insights into the decision-making process. Further research into optimizing transformer architectures for agricultural applications can also contribute to more efficient and accurate plant disease classification.

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