

## PLANTING DADAPS IN THE UP-COUNTRY AND MID-COUNTRY TEA ESTATES

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It has now been increasingly accepted by all tea growers that high and low shade should be established for the successful cultivation of tea. This is increasingly so especially in view of the unprecedented droughts to which tea plantations have been subjected to, like the droughts experienced in 1982 and 1983. The idea of establishing a two tier system of shade above the principal crop is to help cushion some of the insidious effects of light intensity. For the purpose of establishing such a system of shade, the high shade trees are planted at a wider spacing with the low shade occupying an intermediary position. A preferred low shade for the mid- and up-country areas are the Dadaps.

I tried a small trial on Bandarapola State Plantation, Alwatte, in the Matale region in 1984 for the purpose of establishing dadaps as a low shade. As I have obtained satisfactory results with this trial, I suggest that estate Superintendents experiment with this method on their own and if satisfied they could adopt this practice in future.

The manner in which I prepared the mother trees, the method of obtaining the stumps and of planting are outlined below:

(1) After lopping the mother trees, thin out the side branches including the bent and twisted branches about 3 or 4 months after lopping. Allow about 4 to 8 stumps per tree to remain depending on the size of the tree.

(2) In six to eight months after lopping the stumps would be ready for planting. Over matured stumps from the line gardens, boundaries should not be planted. After lopping select stumps which are 7 to 7½ ft. in length and planting should be done on the day of lopping or on

the following day. Those estates which have to purchase their stumps should transport their stumps on the day of lopping and plant them on the following day. I have seen that some estates lop their stumps and they are transported about a week later. At the time of delivery the ends are once again cut, so that the stumps appear to be fresh but when these stumps are planted their germination is very low.

(3) The planting hole should be at least 6" in diameter and 12 to 14" deep. Holing alavangoes should be used for this purpose.

(4) Planting distances could vary. Since most of the estates would be aiming at 40 *Grevellia* trees per acre, the planting distance of this would be 32' x 32', which would give 42 plants per acre. Then a convenient planting distance for dadaps would be 16' x 16' which would give 170 stumps per acre.

(5) Once the stumps are brought to the field, both ends are once again shaved off with a slanting cut to uniform lengths of about 7' or slightly less.

(6) The stumps are then placed in the holes and filled with the soil from the contour drains. The holes should then be tightly pressed with the heel round the stumps. If you use the soil from the drains, you would be cleaning the drains as well !

(7) A coat of white washing lime should be applied to the stumps from the top to the bottom by using a white washing brush. This should be done on the day of planting or on the following day. Dolomite could be added as recommended by the T.R.I.

The stumps planted as detailed above have the following advantages:-

- (a) The percentage of rooting is over 90%.
- (b) Bud break takes slightly longer, but mostly it occurs round the top end, where the polythene has been tied.
- (c) The colour of the stumps being white and the background being green the rows could be seen very well.

Those estates who would like to try this method of planting could divide a field into two equal halves. You could try out this method in one-half of the field and the traditional method in the other half. They should then count the number of stumps planted in each side. After about 4 months or so, they could count the number of stumps which have died in each block and then work out the percentage of rooting.