

The Ceylon Coconut Planters' Review

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EDITORIAL

HIGH YIELDING PLANTING MATERIAL

The Coconut Research Institute supplies over a million seedlings every year both for replanting and new planting. In fact in 1959, 1,984,675 seednuts were laid down in nurseries while 1,296,768 seedlings issued for planting.

All these seedlings have been produced from so called 'BLOCK NUTS', i.e. from high yielding blocks, all the palms of which may not necessarily be high-yielding mother palms.

In view of the fact that planting material produced in this manner is not satisfactory, the Institute has recently commenced a scheme of selection of 'MOTHER PALMS' to replace the supply of 'BLOCK NUTS', so that better quality seedlings could be supplied. It is expected that these seedlings should be available in the course of next year.

The paper on the 'Method of artificial pollination of coconut palms' published in this Number refers to the production of seedlings of even a higher quality by the method of artificial pollination. The production of such seedlings have been in operation during the last few years, but unfortunately in view of the method involved the supply has been limited.

Until recently seedlings produced by this method were issued to the planters at the rate of 70 each, so that their performance under different climatic and soil conditions could be studied. Recently however, the Coconut Research Board has decided to issue 500 seedlings to each applicant as approved by the Research Committee to be planted under such conditions as would provide information regarding their performance.

We are pleased to record that individual planters have got their own staff trained as pollinators at the Institute so that besides the limited supply we produce, the private section could have its own supply of high quality seedlings.

The Institute has also a Pollen Bank from which pollen is supplied to individuals who have got trained pollinators.

PLANT PESTS

With the supply of coconut seedlings rehabilitation of extensive areas and young plantations coming up in various parts of the island, this will be an opportunity to bring to notice the incidence of pests which have to be carefully watched and controlled.

Young plantations have been attacked not so much by Coconut Black Beetle, but by Red Weevil, and from reports received by the Crop Protection Division such attacks appear to be menacing young plantations in all parts of the island. This pest is insidious in its attack and its detection is not easy and is even belated, by which time the palms have been damaged to such an extent that particularly in the case of palms in stem, it is only noticed after the palms have completely collapsed.

We are pleased to bring to the notice of coconut planters the use of a systematic insecticide 'Systox' with which the Crop Protection Division has been experimenting with some measure of success, and also a very simple technique that has been recently developed of introducing this insecticide to control and eradicate this menacing pest.

ARTICLES FROM COCONUT PLANTERS

In the first number of this Journal the Editorial Board made a plea inviting practical planters to contribute articles to this publication and also send letters to the Editor on matters of interest to the coconut industry. We would again renew this appeal and request coconut planters to send us contributions which we would gladly publish. The small staff of the Coconut Research Institute alone would find it difficult to run a publication of this nature; further such contributions by planters would bring to our notice problems which they wish The institute to tackle.