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# BLISTER BLIGHT

## THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY TIPPING ON YIELD\*

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Today, with ever increasing costs of production, every extra pound of tea harvested helps towards keeping these costs within economic bounds. One may ask, how can the yield be improved when a shortage of artificial manure and Blister Blight have to be contended with? Would early tipping help towards these problems?

The object of tipping is to stop the growth of the primaries, and thereby induce them to make secondaries which later form the plucking table of the bush. If pruned tea is left untipped until the primaries have become red from the base upwards, it will be observed in a number of jats that very few laterals are produced. Tipping at this

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\* The Institute does not necessarily endorse the views expressed in papers contributed by persons other than members of the staff.

stage, apart from being expensive, is equivalent to a light prune, wastes a considerable amount of the reserves of the bush in the shape of tippings thrown away, while the time and energy spent by the primaries growing up in an unchecked state could have been utilised in forming the secondaries. In other words, late tipping is a means of restricting crop.

\* The ideal method of tipping would be to stop the growth of every primary as and when it reached the level at which the work was to be undertaken. As this might, in some cases, possibly be thought uneconomical, it is suggested as a compromise that tipping be undertaken when the *tips* of approximately half the primaries have reached the tipping level on half the bushes. If tipping is undertaken in this manner, all the secondaries do not grow simultaneously and therefore are not all susceptible to an attack from Blister Blight together. The method therefore provides protection against isolated infection periods, but not, of course, against the effects of a long and continuous period of weather favourable to infection. Also the bushes are brought into plucking earlier, which must increase the yield at the beginning of the cycle.

In view of the importance of increasing yields, and of taking precautions to try and decrease possible damage from Blister Blight, the following notes are published in the hope they may prove of interest and help.

The table shows the yields of some fields at varying ages from the commencement of pruning, during the early stages of two pruning cycles, and in all cases it will be seen the yields are higher when the tipping has been carried out earlier. It is not claimed that the whole of the increase in yield can be put down to earlier tipping, for some of it is accounted for by a lighter

type of pruning. This also is recommended by the Tea Research Institute as another means of combating the ravages of Blister Blight. The opinion is generally held that leaf which can be harvested during the tipping period is a negligible quantity. While this is so if the majority of the primaries have been allowed to grow up, quite substantial yields may be obtained before the first plucking if the tipping is undertaken early. This is clearly apparent in the table if it is borne in mind that only a small area of any particular field comes into plucking on the first round.

The above fields represent 455 acres, pruning in both cycles having commenced on 1st June and ended by 31st January. Any discrepancies in the times of pruning individual fields can be ascertained by the differences in "Days at 30th April." Final yields are up to 30th April in both cycles, so 334 days shows pruning as having commenced on 1st June. Field "M", 5,000 feet elevation, is of a very poor jat; it was given a cut-across this cycle at the previous tipping level, and the effect on yield of this light pruning is of interest. During the whole of the previous two-year cycle this field gave a yield of only 855 pounds of made tea per acre.

The figures in the table represent an increase in "This Cycle" of 33,365 lb. made tea or 73 lb. per acre. The importance of earlier tipping as a means of increasing crop during the first year from pruning, thereby alleviating some of the evil effects of Blister Blight on yield in the early part of the cycle, is apparent.

If these notes should persuade any one to try this method, it may be of interest to him to know that the cost of tipping is greatly reduced. Knives are unnecessary except for any fringe lungs, and if the second tipping is correctly timed, *i.e.*, when those primaries untipped at the first tipping

Field	PREVIOUS CYCLE						THIS CYCLE					
	Days from commencement of pruning to		Yield in pounds per acre (from commencement of pruning) up to				Days from commencement of pruning to		Yield in pounds per acre (from commencement of pruning) up to			
	(a) 1st Plucking	(b) April 30th	120 Days	180 Days	240 Days	April 30th	(a) 1st Plucking	(b) April 30th	120 Days	180 Days	240 Days	April 30th
A	212	334	0	0	59	250	141	334	1	48	115	381
B	215	334	0	0	21	190	143	334	3	40	114	402
C*	145	304	0	27	104	384	129	334	23	139	254	599
D	228	295	0	1	27	161	158	278	2	38	173	234
E	198	273	0	0	34	111	154	224	6	53	—	142
F*	129	261	0	3	102	258	123	273	7	69	232	333
G	262	253	0	0	0	4	190	223	0	36	—	81
H	196	164	0	—	—	0	131	166	4	—	—	48
I	214	159	0	—	—	0	167	181	0	49	—	55
J*	159	138	0	—	—	2	142	162	5	—	—	54
K*	175	137	0	—	—	0	121	138	7	—	—	37
L	210	133	0	—	—	0	139	131	10	—	—	18
M*	329	99	0	—	—	0	51	96	—	—	—	179

Note.—When "Days" at 30th April exceed either 120, 180 or 240 days respectively and no crop has been harvested "0" is entered in these columns, similarly when the number of days is less, a "—" is shown. All fields are on a three-year cycle except those marked \*; these two-year fields. Any crop harvested during the time of pruning has not been included.

have reached just above the tipping level, approximately 12 days later, the tippers can bring in up to 45 lb. green leaf per head from medium jat fields. Men are at least twice as expensive as women and appear to take no interest in the amount of leaf

plucked. As an encouragement, and as a means of saving labour, particularly when tipping has to be carried out in the "rush" months, a proportion of the plucked leaf may be given as over-pounds.

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