

Coconut Research Institute.



Leaflet No. 46

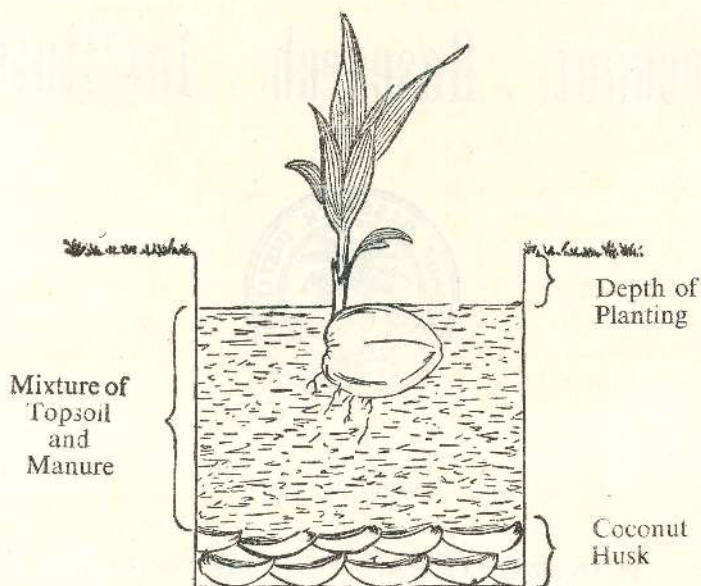
PLANTING COCONUT IN HOME GARDENS

Coconuts can be grown successfully in home gardens for the purpose of obtaining nuts for domestic use. One bunch once a month or two bunches once in two months can be picked from a bearing palm. A plant that is looked after well should begin to bear in about five years, after planting.

In every home garden, depending on the amount of available space a few coconut plants could always be planted. There should however not be much shade over them. Coconuts planted in home gardens do not require much attention except for occasional watering in the early stages and regular manuring with locally available manures such as kitchen ash, cattle dung compost etc. or artificial fertilizer and inspections for any pests or diseases.

HOW TO PLANT

It is good to have the planting hole cut 3 x 3 x 3 feet deep. This is then filled up to about 9" or 1 foot from the ground surface, with top soil, to which compost or cattle dung and kitchen ash or some sort of locally available manure is mixed. Planting holes should not be too close and a distance of not less than 26 feet apart, is recommended.



The seedling is then planted in the centre of the hole with the nut completely buried in it. Preparation of the hole and planting is best done during the rainy season when the soil is wet. If termites (white ants) are found to occur in the garden it would be a good idea to use either Aldrex 2 (from Shell Co. of Ceylon Ltd. Colombo) Intox 8 (from Baur & Co. Ltd., Colombo.) or Chlordox (from Mackwood Ltd., Colombo.) Where Aldrex 2 is used, two table spoons diluted in 5 gallons of water and in the case of Intox 8 or Chlordox, four table spoons diluted in 25 gallons of water could be used as a preventive against Termite damage. In every case, 1 gallon of the diluted solution is poured into the soil round the base of the seedling after planting.

PLANTING MATERIAL

Of the coconut varieties, the Tall variety which is the commercial type is recommended. Dwarf varieties are not recommended, except as ornamental palms, as bearing is seasonal and nuts are small and cannot be scraped with a coconut scraper.

Seedlings of the Tall variety could be obtained by prior arrangement with the District Agricultural Extension officer of the area for planting during May/June and October/November seasons. Seedlings of the Dwarf variety are not available, but Dwarf seednuts could be obtained in limited quantities from the Planting Officer of the Coconut Research Institute. If seed nuts are used they should first be laid in a nursery in the back garden and only selected seedlings used for planting.

Once the seedlings are planted in the garden they should occasionally be watered until established. If there be any old or dud coconut palms, these should first be uprooted before any holing and planting of seedlings is done.

WEEDING

This should be done periodically round the seedlings up to a distance of about 4 feet from the base of the plant and coconut husks could be used as a mulch, on the weeded area.

FENCING

Seedlings should be protected from damage by cattle, goats etc. either by constructing individual enclosures or by fencing the entire land.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Seedlings should be regularly inspected for pests. Black beetle is a common pest and causes wounds usually in the crown of the plant. If a beetle is found it should be extracted by means of a steel speared hook and the wounds dressed with tar.

Sanitation is a cheap and effective way of preventing the breeding of this pest. Organic manure heaps should be examined periodically and grubs and adults if found should be destroyed. Stumps and logs should not be left to decay.

Red Weevil is a more dangerous pest and can kill the plant completely. For information regarding these as well as other pests and diseases of the coconut palm, please write to the Publication Officer of this Institute for free leaflets. Any further information could be obtained free of cost from the Advisory Division of this Institute.

MANURING

In a home garden local manures like compost, cattle dung, goat dung, poultry droppings, kitchen ash and such like material are usually available. These can be used as manure, supplemented suitably. In case these local manures are not available or are in short supply, inorganic fertilizers, will have to be used. Fertilizers are available from the Ceylon Fertilizer Corporation Colombo or from any of the firms dealing with fertilizers. For detailed instructions regarding the use of locally available materials of manurial value please refer to C.R.I. Leaflet No. 9. and for particulars of manuring young palms please refer C.R.I. Leaflet No. 8.

In the case of poultry manure, cattle manure compost or any other bulky manure it is best to first open a trench about 6" deep, at a little distance away from the base of plant, and then apply the manure and cover with soil. Inorganic fertilizer on the other hand could be spread round the plant and forked in or the soil turned over with a mamoty.