

# CINNAMON UNDER COCONUT

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The principal producer of cinnamon in the world is Sri Lanka. On account of this, cinnamon occupies a prominent place among the minor export crops. The main buyer of our cinnamon is Mexico. In the recent past, cinnamon production in Sri Lanka remained unchanged despite fluctuating market conditions. This shows the interest of the producers. Because of easy establishment and management and the fact that relatively poor lands where other crops cannot be grown satisfactorily can be used, cinnamon has become popular. Cinnamon is commonly intercropped in coconut lands in Matara, Galle, Baddegama, Ratgama and Ambalangoda, Horana, Piliyandala, Negombo and Ja-ela.

According to the present market prices the annual nett income from cinnamon with systematic planting, would be about Rs. 4000/= per acre. (Rs. 10,000/= per hectare).

There is a belief among some coconut growers that the coconut yield will be reduced with the establishment of cinnamon. Work carried out by the Coconut Research Institute over a period of 8 years has shown that there is no adverse effect of growing cinnamon under coconut on the coconut yield. However, reduction of coconut yield may be shown due to the following:

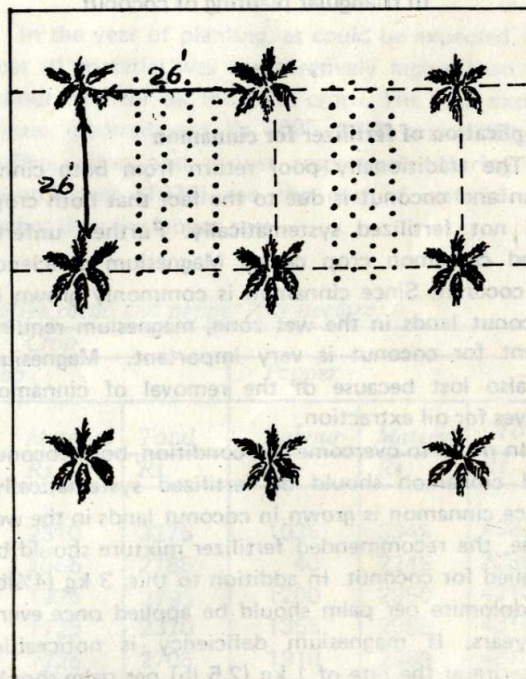
1. Improper spacing adopted in planting cinnamon brings about competition for soil moisture between coconut and cinnamon.
2. Lack of magnesium fertilizer for cinnamon.

## Spacing for cinnamon in coconut lands

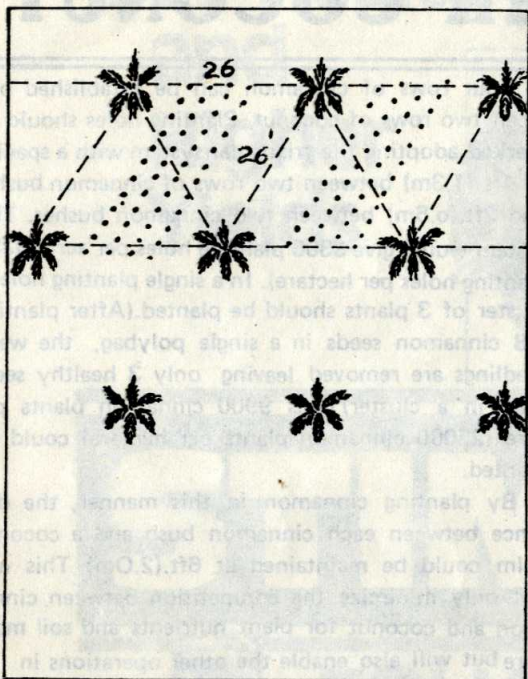
A single cinnamon bush has 8-10 shoots. The spacing between two cinnamon bushes is 4ft x 4ft (1.3m x 1.3m). Cinnamon can withstand drought and if there is insufficient space between coconut and cinnamon, the latter will compete for moisture. This could result in reduced coconut yield, small nuts and poor copra outturn. Taking these into consideration, the spacing recommended is indicated in diagram

Four rows of cinnamon can be established between two rows of coconut. Planting holes should be marked adopting the triangular system with a spacing of 4ft (1.3m) between two rows of cinnamon bushes and 2ft (0.6m) between two cinnamon bushes. This system would give 3300 planting holes per acre (8250 planting holes per hectare). In a single planting hole, a cluster of 3 plants should be planted. (After planting 7-8 cinnamon seeds in a single polybag, the weak seedlings are removed leaving only 3 healthy seedlings in a cluster) Thus 9900 cinnamon plants per acre (22000 cinnamon plants per hectare) could be planted.

By planting cinnamon in this manner, the distance between each cinnamon bush and a coconut palm could be maintained at 6ft (2.0m). This will not only minimize the competition between cinnamon and coconut for plant nutrients and soil moisture but will also enable the other operations in coconut lands.



In square planting of coconut



In triangular planting of coconut

#### Application of fertilizer for cinnamon

The traditionally poor return from both cinnamon and coconut is due to the fact that both crops are not fertilized systematically. Further, unfertilized cinnamon crop causes Magnesium deficiency in coconut. Since cinnamon is commonly grown in coconut lands in the wet zone, magnesium requirement for coconut is very important. Magnesium is also lost because of the removal of cinnamon leaves for oil extraction.

In order to overcome this condition, both coconut and cinnamon should be fertilized systematically. Since cinnamon is grown in coconut lands in the wet zone, the recommended fertilizer mixture should be applied for coconut. In addition to this, 3 kg (4½lb) of dolomite per palm should be applied once every 3 years. If magnesium deficiency is noticeable, kieserite at the rate of 1 kg (2.5 lb) per palm should be applied once every 6 months until symptoms disappear. Afterwards, dolomite should be applied as recommended above.

Just as for coconut, the cinnamon too should be fertilized. For this, a fertilizer mixture prepared by mixing 4 parts of urea, 3 parts of saphos phosphate, 3 parts of muriate of potash and 1 part of kieserite (by weight) is recommended. The recommended dosage is as follows:

	For crops between 1-3 years of age kg/ha/yr	For crops 3 years and above. Kg/ha/yr
Urea	91	182
Saphos phosphate	68	136
Muriate of potash	68	136
Kieserite	23	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>250.0</b>	<b>500.0</b>

The annual dosage recommended above could be applied in split doses once every six months with the two rainy seasons.

In addition weed control is necessary. The growers should also carry out the necessary soil and moisture conservation practices, Mamoty weeding should be avoided during rainy weather. If cinnamon is grown in the recommended manner there will be no adverse effects whatsoever on coconut.