

# SELECTING A GOOD SEEDLING

M H L Padmasiri.

Selection of a good quality seedling is one of the most important operations in nursery management. Selection of seedlings should be carried out with great care as a quality seedling will develop into a vigorous palm and bear early.

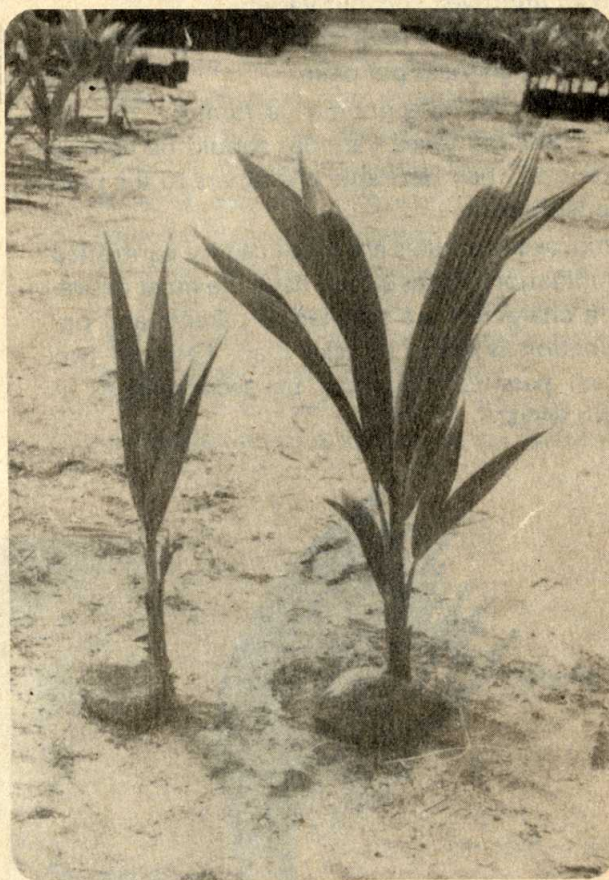
The process of seedling selection commences at 5 months from laying or when 80% of germination has been attained. Non-germinations are removed at this stage in order to obtain the best seedlings that germinate early. It has been shown that seedlings which germinate early have the character of precocity in bearing. A second selection is done after 7 months from laying and at this stage the seedlings should have 3 well developed leaves. In a well managed nursery the seedling rejection rate should not exceed 15% - 20%.

Characters of a good seedling.

- (i) Early germination
- (ii) Stout stem
- (iii) Dark green leaves
- (iv) Broad well-spread leaves
- (v) Short petioles
- (vi) Early splitting of leaves
- (vii) Large number of roots

Seedlings which lack these characters and which are thin, ('leggy') stunted, subjected to attack by pests or diseases or have pale green narrow leaves pointing upwards and a generally weak appearance are rejected.

Good seedlings will give a better coconut stand.



Bad and good seedlings for planting