

Crop Protection Service

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Pests in Coconut, as in any other crops are naturally apparent phenomena. So when such outbreaks occur, out of many pest-control techniques, application of pesticides is one exercise that has to be practised. But unlike in other crops, control of foliage pests by spraying is a very labourious process in coconut due to the following reasons.

- i. Varying heights according to age
- ii. Arrangement of fronds in crown
- iii. Quantity and cost of pesticides in keeping with height and area of application
- iv. Cost of labour and operational costs of Power sprayers.
- v. Destruction to beneficial insects

Agro chemicals are being liberally used today in pest control programmes. But special mention should be made in the use of other techniques such as Biological, Mechanical etc. in pest management programmes.

Spraying of insecticides in coconut pest control is done only on the following conditions.

1. To arrest the swift spread of a pest which cannot be controlled by biological mean.
2. Delayed bio-control activity.
3. Unfavourable environmental conditions for bio-control agents.
4. At the very onset of a severe pest attack.

In agriculturally developed countries, efficient spraying machinery is available and these are employed as and when the situations warrant.

They range from the hand sprayer to very sophisticated power sprays.

While spraying against coconut pests, the equipment varies with the age and situation of the plantation. In case of seedlings, a hand sprayer a light portable sprayer could be employed. But for spraying tall palms a high powered power sprayer becomes a necessity.

The Crop Protection Division of this Institute is equipped with a Crop Protection Unit to combat such difficult tasks. This unit has been mainly responsible for the successful control of Coconut Caterpillar, Coconut Scale, Nettle Grub, Spotted Locust and *Promecotheca cumingi* pest outbreaks which threatened our coconut plantations. The main objective of this Crop Protection Unit is to help growers to combat pests within a short period of time.

If a grower makes a request when in necessity, and if the spraying is considered necessary, the Coconut Research Institute will take necessary steps to offer the free services of this unit. The estate owners will have to supply the following.

- i. Necessary chemicals
- ii. Petrol for power sprayers
- iii. Labourers
- iv. Other items such as Bamboo picking pole cart or a tractor, empty barrels etc.

Coconut growers who wish to avail themselves of this free Crop Protection Service are kindly requested to write to Director, Coconut Research Institute, Lunuwila.