Ceylon Cocon. Plrs. Rev. (1973) 7, 41-43.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION

Why is it that some ordinary seedlings are obtained from a nursery where only dwarf king coconut seednuts were planted?

ANSWER

Usually the fertilization of such varieties as the dwarf king coconut and king coconut occurs as a result of the female flowers being pollinated by pollen from the male flowers of the same spathe. Such self-fertilized nuts would give true king coconut/dwarf king coconut seedlings. But if the female flowers of these varieties are pollinated by pollen from the ordinary variety, then it is possible that the seedlings may have a reddish-brown or green stem and leaf base.

M.A.P.M.

QUESTION

Please recommend a weedicide and the details about its application to control 'Mānā' grass?

ANSWER

'Mānā' Grass (*Cymbopogon Confertiflorus*) could be controlled by a systematic combination of mechanical and chemical weed control methods. Repeated slashing or ploughing has to be done in order to exhaust the food reserves of the stems before the application of a weedicide such as Dalapon to prevent further regeneration.

M.A.P.M.

QUESTION

For the last two years we have been applying C.R.I. 'U 3' mixture at 7½ lbs per palm at our Agency estates which are attached to the Galle and Matara districts. Although we have not carried out controlled experiments, we feel that the C.R.I. 'U 3' mixture has not produced the same results as the C.R.I. 'C' mixture which

was used by us earlier. We also feel that the 'U 3' mixture despatched by the Fertilizer Corporation is delivered in a rather poor condition. The fertilizer does not appear to be properly mixed and appears very lumpy.

Please let us have your comments in this connection and your advice regarding the best type of mixture to use.

ANSWER

Nutrientwise CRI 'U3' mixture is the equivalent of CRI 'C' mixture the former containing urea and the latter ammonium sulphate as the source of nitrogen. A field experiment conducted by the Institute on acid lateritic soil at Dankotuwa shows no significant difference between urea and ammonium sulphate. Under certain conditions due to loss of ammonia the performance of urea may not be as good as ammonium sulphate. In such instances an extra amount of urea could produce the same effects as ammonium sulphate. The extra amount of urea would not increase the cost of fertilizer more than that with ammonium sulphate. Try using 3 lbs. of urea instead of 2¼ lbs. in the mixture.

As regards the poor condition of the mixture please write to the Fertilizer Corporation. If the mixture appears to be un-homogeneous it may be due to the segregation of the urea. Urea is obtained in pellet form whereas samphos phosphate is in a very fine powdery condition and the muriate of potash in a very small crystaline form. While transporting the mixture, the urea, because of its relatively larger size, tends to segregate. Trials are being made to eliminate this problem.

The lumpy appearance may be due to absorption of moisture by urea. Though the urea pellets are coated to prevent absorption of moisture the coating may break as a result of rough handling while loading and unloading, transporting and storing. Also, the containers meant to prevent absorption of moisture, may break as a result of rough handling.

If urea is one of the components of the fertilizer mixture, our advice has been that urea be bought separately while saphos phosphate and muriate of potash be bought mixed or otherwise. The mixing of the components could be done at the time of application. It is advisable to avoid storing the mixed fertilizer overnight or for a longer period.

T.S.B.

QUESTION

I have in my land a coconut palm about 7 or 8 years old which has begun flowering. In this palm each leaf axil produces a seedling with tender fronds instead of the normal inflorescence. May I know the reason for this?

ANSWER

There have been reports, of this phenomenon before. A palm in our Coconut Progeny Trial at Walpita has been yielding such abnormal seedlings for about 20 years without interruption. Although this is due to the floral bud being converted into a vegetative bud, we have no information as to why this occurs.

M.A.P.M.

QUESTION

What is Leaf Blight in Coconut?

ANSWER

This is a disease caused by two parasitic fungi *Pestalotiopsis palmarum* and *Helminthosporium incurvatum*. Palms, with poor nutrition either due to manurial imbalance namely nitrogen, phosphorus and potash or due to poor drainage in the soil become susceptible to this disease. This disease could be cured by correcting the above conditions. Please refer to CRI Advisory Leaflet No. 42.

S.M.P.S.

QUESTION

I am troubled with two persistent weeds "Nidikumba" and "Podisiññõmaraṃ" which I have found difficult to completely eradicate by weeding. Please recommend a suitable weedicide and the details of its application to control the above?

ANSWER

Spontox marketed by A. Baur & Co., could be used effectively to control the above two weeds at a dilution of 1 fluid ounce in 2½ gallons of water. Forty to sixty gallons of the above mixture is sufficient for an acre.

The above weedicide is not injurious to the soil as it breaks down when it comes into contact with it.

Subsequent germination of the weed could be prevented by growing a cover-crop on the land. (Regarding cover crops vide CRI Leaflet No. 17).

Special care should be taken to prevent any weedicide coming in contact with the leaves, if chemical weeding is done in a young plantation.

M.A.P.M.

QUESTION

Since the flowering of the second plantation is imminent it is necessary to remove the palms of the first plantation. In view of the high cost that uprooting or cutting down will entail and in view of the possibility of damage to the second plantation, is it possible to remove the palms of the first plantation by the application of some chemicals?

ANSWER

Chemicals can be used to destroy unwanted palms. Since this involves the use of highly poisonous chemicals containing arsenic etc. we do not recommend it.

M.A.P.M.