

BRANCHED COCONUT AT MINICOY

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Though coconut palms are usually uniform in their morphological features, a number of abnormalities in respect of the tree, flower and fruit are met with. One of such abnormalities in respect of the tree is the branched nature. Branching is a rare phenomenon in the coconut palm. Branching of the palm may take place at any stage of the growth and also from any region of the stem. Various workers have in the past described about several such branched coconut palms.

In Minicoy, Lakshadweep, a branched coconut tree has been identified in front of the Meteorological Observatory. This particular tree has two branches. The branches arise from about 5 M from the ground level in the main trunk region. Both the branches are approximately of the same length and girth. Though, according to some workers, branched palms are usually unproductive, this palm has lots of good nuts in both the branches.

Branching in coconut is ordinarily a tetralogical abnormality resulting from an injury or stimulation to the shoot primordial cell/cells during its development. It can hardly be an inherited character. Branching is also induced consequent on the injury of the terminal bud by rhinoceros beetle, lightning and by diseases, fire, storm etc.

Branching in coconut is of much importance since it provides a means for obtaining increased yields from limited space.

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FIGHTING FLOODS

The National Commission on Floods has recommended that a Central Land Use Commission should be set up to bring about uniformity in the existing land use regulations for enforcement in inter-state basins. The Commission, in a series of proposals to the Union Government on the steps needed to combat floods in the country, has also suggested that a special flood-prone area programme similar to the Drought-Prone Area Programme should be launched for rapid development of 'diara' land, along with appropriate research and development of 'diara' land. A plea has been made to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a range of viable alternatives to check floods. Measures should be taken for progressive adoption of social benefit-cost analysis as well. To begin with, the Commission wants that high priority be given to research and economic cells be created at the Centre and State level for this purpose.

--Eastern Economist

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