

Kulasekharam Farm Grows Dwarf Coconuts on Plantation Scale

by

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A rare spectacle of dwarf coconuts grown on a plantation scale in India is provided by the New Ambadi Estate, Kulasekharam in Kanyakumari district of Madras State. Not only that. The nuts yielded by the variety grown here possess all the characters that go to make quality.

There are two main varieties of coconuts in India—the commonly cultivated tall, and the dwarf. The tall is hardy, attaining a height of 40 feet or more. It begins to flower in seven to ten years after planting and comes to normal bearing about five

years later. A good palm may yield 100 nuts or more per annum, which will give about 30 pounds of good quality copra with about 72 per cent. of oil.

The dwarf type, on the other hand, is very delicate attaining a height of 15 feet and rarely living beyond 35 years. It is highly susceptible to insect pests and also fungoid diseases. It is early-bearing, commencing to yield in the third or fourth year of planting. The average yield may be about 60 nuts which may give five to ten pounds of thin, leathery, inferior quality

copra containing about 66 per cent. of oil. Due to its early-bearing nature, ornamental value and dwarf stature, people are showing increasing interest in its cultivation, but to be economic for growing on a plantation scale, a dwarf form must also possess good nut quality. The variety introduced by the New Ambadi Estate seems to fulfil this requirement.

This Estate is situated at the foot-hills of the Western Ghats, just 30 miles north of Cape Comorin. The soil here is good clayey loam having subsoil moisture in summer. The rainfall is abundant, both during the south-west and the north-east monsoons. Of the 500 and odd acres under coconut, the dwarf variety is being systematically grown on 35 acres. The planting was done in 1934-36 by the triangular method with a spacing of 20 ft. x 20 ft. giving 110 trees to the acre.

Three forms—red, yellow and green—distinguished by the colour of foliage and nut are being grown. In the green form, trees with round or oval nuts are also recognised; the former is reported to have been introduced from Antara Estate in Ceylon, and the latter from Banjar Estate, also in Ceylon. The red form is known as Torkinton Red, perhaps after an estate of the same name from which it was introduced. The yellow form again is an introduction from Banjar Estate.

The red and the yellow forms are more or less similar in most respects except for their colour. Both are of short stature, growing to a height of only eight to nine feet in about 15 years, and are reported to have come to bearing in four years after planting. The green forms are a bit taller—16 to 18 feet, and produce slightly bigger nuts than the other two forms.

	Ordinary varieties in India			Introduced varieties			
	Dwarf green	Dwarf orange	Tall	Dwarf green from Antara Estate	Dwarf green from Banjar Estate	Dwarf yellow	Dwarf red
Girth of the nut in inches	13.5	15.00	22.00	22.32	19.84	19.20	18.64
Thickness of the kernel in inches	0.30	0.30	0.50	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.392
Copra content of the nut in gm.	92.14	99.23	170.10	210.00	180.00	195.00	143.00

The copra content of these dwarf introductions from Ceylon compares favourably with that of the tall variety commonly cultivated in India, as seen above. It is

quite likely that there are good dwarf varieties in other countries also, which could be successfully introduced into India.

—Indian Farming.