

# MANAGEMENT OF COCONUT PALMS

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**Abstract:** Coconut, responds well to the management conditions right from the planting. Addition of organics such as coir dust, coconut shredding, forest leaves and cattle manure along with recommended dose of NPK improved the initial growth and establishment of coconut seedlings from 17% to 50% in coastal sandy soil. Nutrient and irrigation management play a vital role in increasing the production and productivity of coconut. A young palm manured and irrigated regularly comes to flowering within three and half years in case of hybrid and four years in case of tall. A neglected old coconut garden rejuvenated with fertilizer management with double dose in the first year and single dose subsequently could increase the nut yield by 265% within four years.

Phosphorus management of palms indicate that skipping of phosphorus for five to six years is possible if available P level is 60 ppm or above. Evaluations of different hybrids and tall have indicated that COD x WCT hybrid can exploit the native fertility of the soil and also applied nutrients more efficiently than WCT.

Palms with early to middle stage of root (wilt) disease respond well to the management practices like addition of organics, application of NPK and Mg, basin management with green manure, irrigation during summer and leaf rot control with sequential application of Bordeaux mixture and Dithane M45. Similarly, Thanjavur/ganoderma wilt affected palms at the initial stages respond well to the management practices like addition of organics, application of neem cake, addition of NPK, drenching of Bordeaux mixture, root feeding of Aureofungin sol + copper sulphate, providing isolation trenches and controlled irrigation.

Management of drought situations in palms with the addition of coir dust or leaves, addition of silt, forming bunds etc. to conserve moisture and supply of water through drip is also necessary to protect the palm without any detrimental effect. Management of palms under inter/mixed cropping systems with adequate manuring and organic recycling increased the nut yield of palms. Management of palms for major and minor pests at various stages of growth is also essential to get economic yield.

## INTRODUCTION

Coconut is grown in more than 90 countries of the world and India occupies third position with an area of 1.22 million ha and an annual production of 6000 to 6500 million nuts. The area under coconut has doubled during the last four decades, increasing from 0.59 million ha in 1949-50 to 1.22 million ha in 1986-87. The production during the same period increased from 3448 to 6404 million nuts. While the production increase is comparable to that of other coconut growing countries, the productivity remains very low at 35 nuts/palm/year. As the major area

under coconut is covered with tall cultivars which cannot be replanted with high yielding hybrids in the near future, our top most priority is to increase the productivity of existing palms.

## MANAGEMENT OF COCONUT PALMS

Management of palms for higher production involves (i) soil and nutrient management (ii) crop management (iii) management under irrigated and water stress conditions and (iv) management of pests and diseases. The research carried out at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI),