

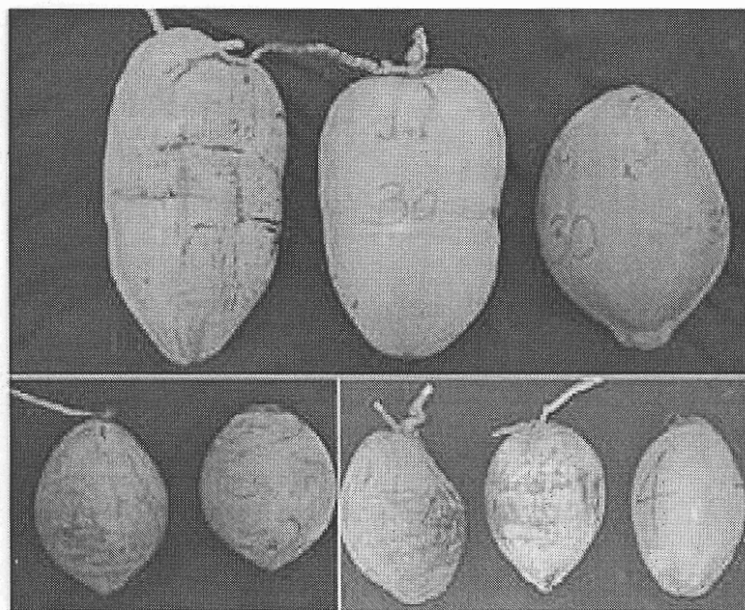
Collecting coconut germplasm from Karnataka, India

Areas surveyed for germplasm collecting

Under the National Agricultural Technology Project on Sustainable Management of Plant Biodiversity, Arsikere, Tiptur, Kumta and Honavar areas of Karnataka State, which are traditionally well known coconut growing regions, were surveyed during the year 2004-2005. The first exploration undertaken was during November 2004 to Arsikere and Tiptur, which is well known for production of ball copra. The area is one among a few in the world where coconuts are grown at an elevation of more than 750 m above msl. The 'Tall' variety grown here has a bigger crown that demands more space and hence traditionally coconuts are planted at wider spacing of 9-11 m. The inter-space is efficiently utilized for intercropping. The climate here is suitable for ball copra making that to fetch a premium price in the market. The nuts are allowed to naturally dry for 9-10 months after harvest to make ball copra.

Table 1. Promising coconut types collected from Karnataka

S. No.	Name of cultivar	Characteristic features
1	Uddha Gangapani	Dwarf to semi-tall palm bearing large, green, oblong fruits. The tender nut water is sweet. Famous tender nut variety.
2	Chitta Gangapani	Dwarf palm with green medium-sized round fruits. The tender nut water is very sweet to taste. Famous tender nut variety.
3	Tiptur Round Tall	High yielding with good copra yield and lesser husk content
4	Arsikere Green Dwarf	Dwarf palm with medium-sized green round fruits having comparatively less husk content
5	Goudana Katte Tall	High yielding palm with brown ovoid fruits with good copra content
6	Ankola Local Tall	High yielding palm bearing fruits with thick endosperm content; Tender nut water and meat, sweet in taste
7	Bassakal Orange Dwarf	Dwarf cultivar, with attractive orange fruits, suitable for tender nut purpose.
8	Hegde Local Tall	High yielding with higher copra content; Tender nut water and meat sweet in taste.



Variability in coconut germplasm collected from Karnataka, India

Coastal Karnataka is another region renowned for coconut cultivation. The Kumta, producing the promising Kumta nut of commerce known for high recovery of copra, yielding 200 g copra per nut. Therefore, the second exploration trip to Karnataka was undertaken during March 2005 and covered Ankola, Kumta and Honavar Talukas of Uttar Kannad district.

Diversity collected

During the exploration trips, 12 distinct coconut types were collected. These included, Uddha Gangapani and Chitta Gangapani, two historically famous tender nut varieties and another rare type from Bassakal, Bassakal Orange Dwarf, bearing elongated orange fruits and with palm characters similar to dwarf types. These are not grown on a large scale, but are found as a sparse scattered population.

These new collections from Karnataka are promising and a few are listed in Table 1 with their cultivar names and characteristic features. These are being grown in nursery and will be conserved in the field genebank at Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod for use in coconut improvement programmes.

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