

# THE EXPERIENCE OF A PLANTER

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## 1. The Establishment of a New Coconut Plantation

Lands selected for a New Coconut Plantation may fall into any one of the following categories.

- (1) Neglected Lands with herbaceous plants
- (2) Shrub jungle lands
- (3) Thick jungle lands.

I propose to deal here with the subject of clearing a thick jungle land for the establishment of a coconut plantation.

An inexperienced person may perhaps feel that clearing a *thick* jungle and planting it with coconut would be difficult. Actually the difficulties are limited. The absence of shrubs and grass enable the planter to clear the land by firing after felling the jungle. In the case of shrub jungle and grasslands, firing would not be so effective a method of clearing the land.

It is good to commence the operations in connection with the clearing after the monsoon rains. The trees that can be felled by *Kathi* knives should be cut and spread evenly on the ground. The trees which yield good timber should not be cut at this stage, but their branches may be cut and spread leaving sufficient clearance around to avoid any damage to them, by fire. After about two months, the shoots coming off the stumps and other plants inadvertently left behind should be cut down. Before setting fire, wood necessary for fence posts, construction of huts or any other work should be removed. The cost of completing the aforementioned work would be about Rs. 100/- per acre.\*

A day with bright sunshine and good blowing should be selected for setting fire to the felled jungle. Those who own adjoining lands should be given prior notice of the date on which firing would be done. Note the direction in which the wind is blowing and set fire at several places of the land in such a way that the wind would facilitate the spread of fire throughout the land. If the fire spreads properly and burns all the jungle cut down, the cultivator could have the satisfaction that his initial

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\* Note. The costs indicated in this article reflect the price conditions prevailing today.

