

POTASH AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN COCONUT MANURING

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IN general, except on a few soils on which coconuts are grown, potash is the dominant requirement of the coconut palm. This has been confirmed in the manurial experiment at Bandirippuwa Estate which has been continued for the last seventeen years, and is yet in progress.

The data given below show the response to two levels of potash manuring: (a) 0.75 lbs. potash (K_2O) equivalent to 1.50 lbs. muriate of potash per palm and (b) 1.50 lbs. potash (K_2O), equivalent to 3 lbs. potash per palm, applied once in two years:—

| Year | Lbs. Copra per acre | |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| | 0.75 lbs. potash per palm | 1.5 lbs. per palm |
| I 1936 | 26 | 50 |
| II 1937 | 47 | 80 |
| III 1938 | 47 | 114 |
| IV 1939 | 28 | 120 |
| V 1940 | 190 | 249 |
| VI 1941 | 122 | 196 |
| VII 1942 | 352 | 470 |
| VIII 1943 | 300 | 407 |
| IX 1944 | 362 | 546 |
| X 1945 | 329 | 422 |
| XI 1946 | 312 | 447 |
| XII 1947 | 382 | 512 |
| XIII 1948 | 442 | 582 |
| XIV 1949 | 401 | 546 |
| XV 1950 | 543 | 711 |
| XVI 1951 | 664 | 846 |

Further the results of this same experiment show that potash manuring definitely improves the copra out-turn of the nuts, *i.e.*, less nuts are required to make a candy of copra.

| | Nuts/candy |
|---|------------|
| No potash | 1,281 |
| 0.75 lbs. potash/palm, once in two years | 1,164 |
| 1.50 lbs. | 1,140 |

This is, however, contrary to the popular view that manuring increases the number of nuts per palm but reduces the weight of the kernel.

Potash deficiency symptoms appearing on the no-potassium plots is indicated by distinct foliage changes in the crown, such as chlorosis and leaf scorch.

These symptoms are shown in the colour photographs printed in this number.*

Visitors are welcome to Bandirippuwa Estate and can inspect these plots.

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