

Red Banana - Promising income

The farmers at yerumbukkadu village of Nagercoil are cultivating Red Banana over the years. They grow it as an intercrop in coconut garden. Red banana can be grown upto 5 years in coconut garden and also after 18 years, red banana give higher income than others. The price of red banana bunch is Rs.350 while for other varieties the price is Rs.150. Mr.Meenakshi sundaram, of this village is cultivating red banana for the past 20 years. Presently he is cultivating red banana in 3 acres, other banana in 2 acres. He explained the production details.

Production technology

The best season is July-August. The crop is raised for 12 months and harvesting is done on the next July – August. Alluvial and red soils are best suited. If grown as intercrop in coconut the land need not to be ploughed. Pits should be taken whereas in single cropping system, the land should be ploughed well without clods, and pits of 1 ½ feet depth and 8 feet spacing should be taken and allowed to dry for 3 days. If the crop is to be rationed , the pit depth should be 2 feet. The plant population will be 680 numbers. It can be increased to 800 by closed spacing near the borders.

The secret behind sucker treatment

Suckers can be obtained from neighboring farms. The cost for one sucker is around Rs.3 each. Cares should be taken to select disease free suckers. Before planting, the suckers should be treated to prevent nematode attacked. The suckers should be soaked for 10 minutes in a solution prepared by mixing 100 liters of water with 3 liters panchakavya (or 3 liters of vermiwash) with trichoderma viridi and pseudomonas.

The large suckers should be placed in the windward side followed by smaller sucker. This helps to reduce wind and gives uniform yield. After one month of planting, sun hemp can be sowed. When it comes to flowering, it should be ploughed insitu. Before harvesting 3 weedings should be done. At 1 ½ months apply vermicompost @ 1 ½ kg per tree and on the 75th day apply 1 basket of farmyard manure with 100gm urea,120g potash, 200g super phosphate for each tree. Within 95-100th day place Azospirillum, vermicompost and phosphobacteria @ 200g per tree.

Panama wilt:

Nematode infestation will be heavy at 100 to 120 days. During this time, apply 200 neem cake + 100g urea +200g potash per tree. Monthly once apply 250g neemcake per tree. Also spray panchagavya (400 ml in 10 liters of water) monthly once.

The plants affected with root knot nematode show yellowing of leaves and small bunches. Suckers treatment is essential to control this. Inter cropping with sun hemp and marigold also controls nematode attack.

The plant affected with panama wilt shows yellowing of leaf borders and the bunches do not show out normally. The leaf drops down and the stem longitudinal cracks. Growing banana crop continuously in the same field causes panama wilt. To control, apply 0.2% carbendozium once in two months or rhizome injection with 3 ml of carbendozium. Stem borer can be controlled by neem cake,(Meenakshi sundaram is applying egg amino acid) on the leaves.

Flowering is at the 7th month. Till then all side suckers should be removed / destroyed. This improves the growth of mother plant. If ratoon crop is planned, retain one healthy sucker after removing the flower from the mother plant. At flowering spray panchakavya on the flowers for good and more yields. The flowers can be removed when two empty bunches appear. 10 days after bunch establishment, the bunch should be covered with coconut fronds or dried banana leaves, this prevents high temperature injury and also improves the colour of the fruit. Harvesting can be done at 11th – 12th month.

If when the traders come to the field to harvest, the rate is Rs,275/ bunch. If taken to the market the price got is Rs.350/ bunch. If the traders come to the field the cost of labour for harvesting and transport is not included. Mr. Meenakshi sundaram says that he gets Rs.1 lakh from his 1 acre of field consisting of 800 plants.(100 plants reduced for disease & damage).

Cotind.,

Economics of Red banana cultivation in 1 acre			
S. No	Particulars	Expenditure	Income
1.	Field preparation	6250	
2.	Pit formation	4000	
3.	Sucker	2400	
4.	Farm yard manure	36,000	
5.	Neem cake	4800	
6.	Bio fertilizers	2700	
7.	Chemical Fertilizer	6500	
8.	Weeding	5000	
9.	Fertilizers application	3200	
10.	Bunch covering	3350	
11.	Sale of bunches [700 bunches * 270 (rupees)]		1,89,000
	Total	74,200	1,89,000
	Net Profit		1,14,800

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