

GRAFTED COFFEE*

WHILE experiment is in its initial stage, many planters are now giving thought to producing a new type of coffee—Arabica grafted on a Robusta stem.

The chief reasons for entering on this experiment are to combat the white stem borer pest and *hemileia vastatrix*, and it has been found that Robusta stems are free from borer while almost immune from *hemileia*.

That the grafted tree will produce a heavier crop is not seriously doubted, and that it will provide better type of coffee is anticipated, since all grafted fruits are an improvement.

All local experiments are recent and perhaps more advanced at the Agricultural Research Station, but so keen are most planters that they are not waiting for ultimate results before experimenting on their own initiative.

Some planters are still sceptical, however, regarding the success of the graftings, but once the method is thoroughly understood, it should be ninety per cent. successful.

A local nurseryman has been experimenting for some time and successfully grafted trees can be seen.

It is anticipated that a fully grown grafted tree will have a Robusta stem 18 inches to 2 feet above ground and that Robusta sap, permeating the rest of the stem, will render the tree much less liable to borer infestation, and that much of the immunity enjoyed by the Robusta, as regards fungous diseases, and at least some of the insect pests, will be imparted to the graft.

Whether the graft will develop into a much larger tree than the usual Arabica species remains to be seen, but it is anticipated that the more robust root systems of the Robusta stock, will be reflected in a larger spread of the top with consequent increase in bearing surface.

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