

INTERCROP, COCONUT LANDS WITH LEMONINE

M.F.S.W. FERNANDO AND B.S. JAYARATHNAM
Research Officers - Horticulture
(Regional Agricultural Research Centre-Makandura)

The profit margin from intercropping coconut lands depend mainly on the compatability of crop combinations. Therefore a number of crop combinations were studied. at the Regional Agricultural Research Centre, Makandura to identify a few profitable intercrop combinations for coconut holdings. Particularly in the wetter parts of the Kurunegala district lemonine intercropping was promising. It is expected that lemonine cultivation could also be expanded to most of the relatively dry areas of Makandura region with supplimentary irrigation.

Lemonine belongs to the family Rutaceae. It is an intra-generic hybrid of lemon (C.Lemon) and lime (C. aurantifolia). A lemonine fruit is light green to lemon yellow in colour, with a slightly smooth surface and gloss. The shape is ellipsoid to obvate with a diameter of 2-3 cm. The lemonine fruit is rich in vitamin C, and also in minerals Calcium, Phosphorus, and Iron. These fruits can be used in making fresh cool drinks, preserved foods, or as a raw material in some industries.

Lemonine plant grows erect. Its growth is localised in the terminal portions with little activity of the lateral buds. As the branch extends, the weight of leaves and fruits and the effect of shade from foliage will generally force it towards a horizontal position.

A planting space of 3x3m can be used i.e. two rows per coconut avenue. With proper crop

management the first harvest can be obtained about 14-15 months after planting. A high level of production can be maintained for 6-7 years and perhaps extended further with good management. Lemonine grows and yields well in well drained fertile soils (P.H. of 5-6). In a well maintained crop, under low country wet and intermediate climatic conditions, fruits can be harvested bi-weekly throughout the year. Thus it is ideal to be grown in Gampaha and Kurunegala districts.

By following the management practices recommended by the Department of Agriculture the projected fruit yield is about 10,000 - 11,000 kg per acre. This will give the farmer an additional income of about 1,500-2,000 rupees per month. The break down of the cost of cultivation and the income in general, for an acre of intercropped lemonine growth on coconut lands are given below.

Labour	-	Rs.6,000.
Fertilizer, agro chemicals	-	Rs.2,500
Total cost	-	Rs.8,500
Total income	-	Rs.30,000
		(10,000kg
		Rs.3/kg)
Profit	-	Rs.21,000
Monthly income	-	Rs.1,790

Because of regular and heavy bearing habit and easy management of the crop, lemonine cultivation can be promoted as a suitable intercrop in the coconut triangle.