

A SIMPLE METHOD OF SULPHUR DUSTING

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THE following suggestion is made in the hope that it will be of assistance to my fellow planters, who find it difficult to transport a heavy machine into out-of-the-way corners of the estate and to those who have to deal with erratically wintering trees. It also seems to me to solve the problem of dusting small-holdings, whose proprietors cannot be expected to face the capital cost of a dusting machine, or the outside labour required to carry and operate it.

The method is an elaboration of the gardening practice of filling a piece of muslin with the dusting powder and diffusing this over the plants or bushes by gently tapping it.

Small bags large enough to contain two or three pounds of sulphur loosely are made of old sacking. One of these, after having been filled with sulphur, is tied, top and bottom, to the end of a pole, the length of which will depend to a very great extent on the height of trees to be treated ; but I do not think anything much more than 25 feet will be found convenient. This is also about the height of the effective vertical throw of a fairly powerful machine.

If the bag be now agitated by shaking the pole, a cloud of sulphur is liberated and the effect is the same as if it were ejected by a machine or exploded by a bomb at that height.

Labourers, especially Sinhalese, become very expert at liberating the required amount and can scramble with their poles into every corner.

An intelligent supervisor, working a gang, can concentrate his men in a gully with a favourable wind-drift ; spread them across a hillside, or restrict the dusting to individual, isolated trees or patches. Given suitable weather conditions, four men can quite easily treat 100 acres in one day, with extra labourers for transport.

One advantage of this method is that, if the bags be filled uniformly with a previously weighed quantity of sulphur, the amount distributed over any area can be very readily checked at any time and adjusted as may be found necessary.

The small-holder can have no excuse, as the only appliance he requires is a pole cut from his own land and an old piece of sacking. He can then treat the whole of his ten acres at his own convenience, without any outside assistance, in an hour or so.

This simple method was devised for treating small areas, but, no doubt, could be elaborated to deal with quite large areas if necessary and I trust will assist materially in enabling the Department to implement Mr. R. G. Coombe's resolution, passed at the meeting of the Central Board of Agriculture on November 18, 1937.