

(C) A NOTE ON THE EFFECT OF SOWING DATE ON THE AGE OF MAHA PADDY

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THE correct sowing date for a variety of irrigated paddy is determined by (a) the date or period when the crop should ripen and (b) the age of the variety. There are very definite periods for most parts of Ceylon during which the crop must mature if satisfactory yields are to be obtained. Such periods may last for a month but are nevertheless comparatively restricted and are determined largely by weather conditions and to some extent by the incidence of paddy-fly attack. The weather at sowing time may influence the sowing date in that if sufficient water is not available at the proper time to enable the normal-aged variety to be grown a shorter-aged paddy must be sown later. Long-aged paddies (6-6½ months) seem to respond more markedly to change of sowing

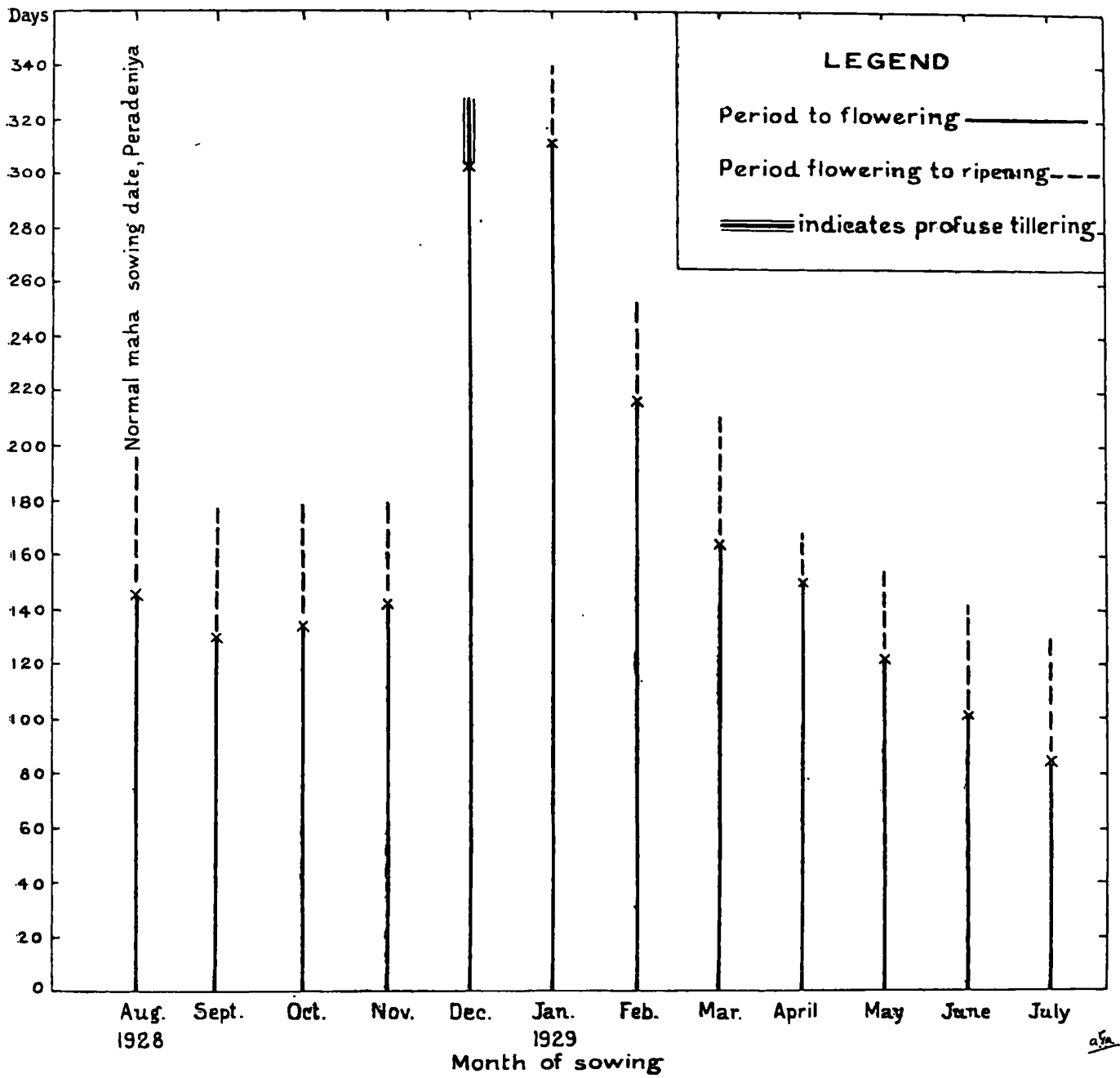


Fig. II.
The effect of sowing date on age of a maha paddy.

date than short-aged paddies and instances had been reported where long-aged paddies sown at the wrong time had never flowered.

The opportunity was taken at Peradeniya in 1928 and 1929 of sowing a *marwi* selection whose normal age was 6-6½ months, monthly throughout a complete year with the object of noting the changes in the growth period. These are shown graphically in Fig. II. The first sowing took place in August (the normal month for sowing at Peradeniya) and the last in the following July.

The normal age was 195 days and the September, October, and November sowing showed but little departure from this but from October onwards the panicles were not fully developed and yields in the field would have been unremunerative. The plants sown in December were caught by the north-east monsoon when normally they should have been flowering. No flowering took place at all and growth continued for 328 days. During the last 25 days profuse tillering took place. The January sown plants grew for 339 days and at maturity the few panicles formed were composed almost entirely of empty grains. From February onwards the age decreased until from May onwards it was very definitely sub-normal. In all these cases few panicles developed and all contained numerous empty grains. The effect of sowing at the wrong time will probably vary with different climates.

It will be seen that the meticulous care taken by the cultivator to sow the proper aged variety is sound agricultural practice.