

# WINGED BEAN

SL ⑥

Evaluation of varieties for High Yield

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Winged bean (*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*) has been cultivated in Sri Lanka for many years. Its importance as a protein rich food was recognised only very recently. The green leaves, pods, and seeds are all rich in proteins and vitamins. Tuberous roots of winged bean contain a high level of protein. Products of winged bean has a great potential for improving the quality of human diet.

Winged bean can be cultivated easily and its pod yields (exceeding 70,000 Kg/ha) are much greater than other leguminous vegetables (e.g. cow-pea 10000 Kg/ha). Active root nodules of winged bean convert atmospheric nitrogen into plant nitrogen. Therefore when this crop is grown, even on relatively poor soils nitrogen fertilizer application is unnecessary.

## Screening of suitable varieties :

At Maha Illuppallama Research Station, work is in progress to screen high yielding varieties. A good variety should be adoptable to the local climatic situation, and give high yields of pods that are acceptable to the consumer.

In 1977 three varieties introduced from Nigeria and one variety introduced from Papua New Guinea were tested against the local variety. Yield performance and other important characteristics were recorded. Table 1 shows the results of this trial.

TABLE 1 : Yield and important characteristics of the varieties tested at Maha Illuppallama (in 1977)

Variety	Green Pod Yield Kg/ha	Pod Colour	No. of days to 1st. har ves	Average Pod length (cm)
Chimber	70,916	Reddish Brown	75	27
TPT - 2	96,775	Green	90	21
TPT - 6	100,853	Green	100	21
TPT - 8	76,401	Green with Brownish tinge	90	18
Local	92,698	Green	125	15

### Promising varieties:

In the varieties TPT-2 and TPT-6 the first pick of green pods was obtained at the age of 90 and 100 days respectively. Thereafter pods were harvested at 5 - 6 days intervals. Pod yields gradually increased up to 6 - 7 months. After that yields gradually declined.

Chimber variety matured earlier. The first pick was taken on 75th day. In this variety vegetative growth was slower at the earlier stages. The yield was comparatively lower than other varieties tested. This variety was not considered as suitable due to the lower pod yield and unacceptable pod colour (reddish brown).

The local variety had heavy vegetative growth and was late to mature.

Results of this experiment show that TPT-2 and TPT-6 are promising varieties.

All the tested varieties had the ability to produce large numbers of active nodules, although they were not inoculated. Seeds of all varieties retained their viability for over 5 months when stored at room temperature.

### Tuber Yield:

At Maha Illuppallama two varieties introduced from Nigeria (TPT-2 and TPT-6) were able to produce tubers. Tuber yields of TPT-2 and TPT-6 were 804 and 902 Kg/ha respectively. The variety TPT-8 failed to form tubers. The local variety continued to grow and its tuber development is yet to be assessed. The use of tubers as a component in our local diet remains to be investigated.

### Present Programme:

At present a total of 30 varieties introduced from several countries are being evaluated. Data will be collected on pod yield, pod size, pod colour, duration of vegetative growth phase, for each variety. The seed and tuber yields also will be measured and recorded.

