STANDARDIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SOIL TESTING METHODS FOR RUBBER SOIL OF SRI LANKA WITH EMPHASIS ON SOIL PHOSPHATE

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Preliminary data obtained from a co-operative study on possibilities of standardization and improvement of soil testing methods for the humid tropics with emphasis on soil phosphate done in collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute and the Institute of Soil Fertility in the Netherlands, is discussed.

The results show that the standard programme of analysis used in this study can be successfully applied for the investigation of the rubber soils of Sri Lanka. The Olsen and Bray - II methods are more suitable than the NH_4 - acetate / acetic acid method for the determination of "available P".

The Sri Lanka Rubber Soils appear to be generally poor in calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphate and nitrogen at the time of replanting. Increase of K in the formulation for the *Padambe* series, if the soils are poor in mica, is recommended. In the soils with a very low Ca and Mg status such as in Kiribathgala estate, the use of dolomite should be considered.