

PLANT POPULATION STUDIES WITH 'MAURITIUS'  
PINEAPPLE UNDER COCONUT

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Pineapple, variety Mauritius is grown extensively under coconut mainly in Gampaha and Kurunegala districts. Planting methods of pineapple in monocrop has to be changed to reduce competition for resources with coconut and to have a sizable population when intercropped with coconut. Variety Mauritius produces relatively more number of sucker than kew, thus plant spacing within a row too has to be altered.

Three planting methods (i) Two single rows (farmer practice) (ii) Three single rows (iii) Two single rows and one double row in the middle - per coconut avenue and three within row spacing (30, 45 and 60 cm) were tested for fruit yield,

fruit size and sucker production, at Makandura.

The fruit weight with crown of the first crop varied significantly among three methods of planting at all three spacings except between 8424 and 6552 plants/ha at 60 cm within row spacing. The fruit weight with crown varied significantly among spacing in all methods of planting except between 6240 and 4680 plants/ha in two single row methods of planting.

The total number of suckers observed after the harvest of first crop didn't vary significantly among the planting methods. The total number of suckers observed among populations having 30cm 45cm and 60cm within row spacing in two single row methods of planting didn't vary significantly. However the total number of suckers observed varied significantly between populations having 30cm and 60cm within row spacing in three single row methods of planting (13,104 and 6,552 plants/ha) and in two single rows with one double row method of planting (16,848 and 8,424 plants/ha).

The suckers that were removed after the harvest of the first crop leaving a maximum of two suckers intact were scored based on the size of the sucker. The product of sucker size and number of suckers thinned - out didn't vary significantly among the populations having 30cm, 45cm, and 60cm within row spacing in two single rows with one double row method of planting. However significant variations were observed among populations having 30cm and 60 cm within row spacing in both two single rows and three single rows method of planting. Number of suckers observed after the harvest of first crop decreased with increasing within row spacing in all three methods of planting, while the product of sucker size and number increased indicating that more number of large suckers arise at wider within row spacing.