EFFECT OF MOISTURE LOSS FROM STEM CUTTINGS ON THE GERMIABILITY OF TWO CASSAVA VARIETIES

W.M.S.M. Bandara and M. Sikurajapathy
Central Agric. Research Institute, Gannoruwa.

Harvesting and re-establishment of cassava can not be done simultaneously in most cassava growing areas especially in the dryzone due to lack of water. Stakes of the previous crop undergo a period of storage under shade for a few weeks. Variation of stem characteristics which are directly related to germiability of cassava were evaluated in this study. Newly released non branching variety CARI 555 and a branching variety "Wagolla" were used. Water content of the stake decreases rapidly in non branching variety after a period of 20 days of storage. Assuming that the germination rate started to decline sharply when water content fell below 55% - 60% (Leihner 1984), the branching variety "Wagolla" shows better chances to survive during the storage time. It remains 45% water content even 35 days after harvest, while CARI 555 has only 25% which produces very low germinating rate. Therefore it can be concluded that, "Wagolla" has much adaptability to dry conditions as its stakes retain high moisture during storage.

References: Leihner, D. 1984, Cassava Planting Material, Conditions for its Production Cassava News Letter 8: 1-11.