

B-08: Reproductive efficiency of Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) in the first bearing season in the sandy regosola at Vantharamoolai (Agroecological region DL3)

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Cashew grows wild in the sandy regosols of the Batticaloa District. Four plots of 49 saplings per plot were planted at 3 m intervals in 1990. The saplings were raised in the Department nursery from seeds obtained locally. The trees came into bearing in 1994. The trees which flowered were marked out and recorded. Number of inflorescences per tree were recorded and followed through the season. Number of flowers per inflorescence were recorded and marked and their fate was followed to fruit maturity.

Sixty percent of the trees flowered. Trees on the lower and the higher range of diameter classes were found to flower less than the trees of the middle range. More flowers were seen in the central region of the inflorescence.

Flowering commenced in late March and a smaller proportion was added in the subsequent weeks. The flowers rarely survived more than a day and those which survived for 3 days produced fruits. 25% inflorescence produced fruits and only 15% flowers produced fruits. 9.3% fruits were found to mature. The mortality of flowers were very high, and rain during flowering was found to be detrimental. Mortality of fruits was less than that of flowers and was more anthropogenic in nature.

More appropriate techniques viz. artificial pollination, cover from rains etc. may have to be used to make these orchards productive.