

B-49 Parental types of betel in Sri Lanka

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Betel vine (*Piper betel* L.) is an important commercial crop grown for its leaves. It acts as a masticatory, oral deodorant and gentle stimulant. Presently it has a considerable export value and Betel exports fetch a considerable amount of foreign earnings. Although Betel vine was cultivated in Sri Lanka for many decades, not much research has been done on its improvement. An understanding about its morphology is a prerequisite for any planned improvement programme. This study is a part of research activities on improvement of Betel crop carried out at IBRS, Narammala.

Betel vine has been identified as a dioecious creeper and in India it is propagated only from the male plant by cuttings. The occurrence of female plants was not reported until recently.

This investigation revealed that, in Sri Lanka, both dioecious and monoecious types of Betel are available. Monoecious type of Betel is extremely rare and dioecious female type of Betel is the type cultivated in abundance. Dioecious male type of Betel is not available in Sri Lanka.