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Pigeonpea could be mulched in order to cut down the use of expensive and harmful agrochemicals to weeds and pests. Paddy straw and coir dust are the common organic mulches. However, coconut fronds could be used to mulch pigeonpea intercrop in coconut estates. The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of coconut frond mulch on growth, yield and some yield components in a Randomized Complete Block Design with 4 replications at RARC, Makandura. Four pigeonpea introductions from ICRISAT standard variety ICPL 2 were evaluated for yield with and without mulch during Maha 96/97 and Yala 97/98.

The mulch treatment was found very effective in improving the yield of pigeonpea. The yield of pigeonpea with mulch was more than double the yield of pigeonpea without mulch, irrespective of the varieties of pigeonpea tested. Each of the yield components make a highly significant contribution to the final yield of pigeonpea with coconut fronds as inter-row mulch. There was a significant reduction in the blister beetle population when pigeonpea was mulched. Hence hand picking and destruction of this pest was practised daily in order to study the effect of relative build up and decline of the population on the yield.

The application of coconut frond mulch and control of blister beetle by hand-picking are environmentally very sound and easily adaptable production technologies to improve pigeonpea yield and to reduce the loss of production of pigeonpea in coconut estates.