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Variation of nut and copra characteristics in different *Cocos nucifera* L.(Coconut) cultivars

The objective of the present study was to evaluate the nut and the copra characteristics of 4 improved crosses of coconut varieties namely Tall x Tall (T x T: CRIC 60), Tall x Dwarf (T x D: CRIC 65), Dwarf x Tall (D x T: CRIC 65) and Tall x San Ramon (T x SR: CRISL 98) as against the open pollinated tall variety since this could provide some vital information necessary for different end products.

Coconuts were collected from variety blocks in the Bandirippuwa estate, Lunuwila. Eight samples of each variety consisting of 10 nuts per sample were kept for seasoning (4Weeks). After taking the husked nut weight, nuts were processed into copra and evaluated for quality characteristics such as per nut weight, per nut husk weight, per nut shell weight, oil recovery per kg of copra.

The cultivar T x SR recorded the highest values for the per husked nut weight (1083.0 g); and for the per nut copra weight (263.5 g) followed by T x T (nut wt:1010.9 g ; copra wt: 242.5 g) , T x D (nut wt: copra wt: 215.4 g), D x T (nut wt: 756.6 g ; copra wt:222.0g and the open pollinated ordinary tall variety (nut wt: 717.4g; copra wt:191 .7g) This indicate the variety T x SR is the most ideal for kernel products such as copra and desiccated coconut since it was found to give the best outturn of copra

The amount of oil extracted per Kg of copra was highest for T x SR (663. 7 g/ kg) and this suggest that T x SR could become a promising cultivar for coconut oil production T x SR also found to record the highest per nut husk weight (1089.0) and the highest nut shell content (174 .0 g) . While the higher mass content of husk of T x SR would be ideal for coir fibre industry, its heavier shells are very much beneficial for charcoal production

and activated carbon industry. As a variety with all these premium characteristics T x SR will have a tremendous economic value in the future coconut industry in Sri Lanka.