

## Evaluation of Pepper germplasm for Dry Zone of Sri Lanka under irrigation

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Land is a limiting factor for the expansion of Pepper (*Piper nigrum*) cultivation in the traditional wet zone of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, land is abundant in the dry zone of Sri Lanka under Mahaweli irrigation schemes. With the objective of developing suitable cultivars under irrigation for the dry zone of Sri Lanka, 15 local selections, three introductions and a hybrid were evaluated at Eppawala in a dry zone adaptability study.

Height and the number of laterals were measured. Cultivars KG/HN/1 and MB 12 reached a height of 198 cm and 195 cm respectively in an year. Cultivars MW 18 and KY/PP/3 gained the lowest height, which was 112 cm. Number of laterals of the tested cultivars ranged from 3 to 13 where cultivars KW 33, GK 49 and KG/HN/1 gave the highest number of lateral branches; 13, 11 and 10 per plant respectively ( $P < 0.05$ ). BD/KG/41 (3), Panniyur (4), In10 (4) and In2 (5) gave the lowest number of branches ( $P < 0.05$ ). The two introductions performed poorly compared to the local selections.

It can be concluded that there is a good potential for growing pepper in dry zone and the cultivars KG/HN/1, GK 49, BD/HM/33, KW 33 and BD/GM/28 showed a great potential as suitable cultivars for the dry zone under irrigation.

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