

## PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY FOR ROBUSTA COFFEE

In Tamil Nadu, robusta is being cultivated only in about 25% of the area with major distribution in Nilgiris and to a small extent in Pulneys. In Nilgiris robusta areas (Cudalur), the agro-climatic conditions are comparable to that of Wayanad in Kerala, which is an exclusive robusta area. Thus, the packages suggested for robusta in Wayanad could be adopted in the Gudalur also. On the other hand, in Pulneys the robusta behaves differently by manifesting running blossom due to protracted rainfall. It is prudent not to encourage robusta cultivation in the Tamil Nadu region especially in Pulneys and Shevaroy. However, information on the important aspect of robusta cultivation is provided hereunder for the information of robusta growers in Tamil Nadu.

- For vacancy filling, rooted cuttings or seedlings of S.274 and CxR may be used.
- All the soil and weed management practices suggested for arabica could be followed in case of robusta also.
- The optimum population of shade trees for intensive cultivation is 75-100 /ha and for sustainable production is 100-120 trees/ha.
- In unirrigated robusta, the bush management may be restricted to centering, handling and periodical removal of suckers and shot hole borer affected twigs.
- In irrigated robusta, regular light pruning before blossom irrigation in addition to handling, centering, desuckering and removal of shot hole borer affected twigs is suggested.
- Gourmandisers should not be allowed. In case allowed, they should be removed after taking one crop.
- Fertilizer application should be made in 2 splits in unirrigated fields and 3-4 splits in case of irrigated fields.

- For blossom irrigation, other annexure apply 1.5-2 inches irrigation during Feb-March followed by backing irrigation with one inch after a gap of 20-25 days.
- In case of unirrigated fields, giving a nutrient mixture spray (1 kg urea, 1 kg super phosphate, 750 g MOP and 1 kg zinc sulphate in 200 litres of water) 45 days after last monsoon shower will be useful in overcoming the drought effect on the plants. A second spray of nutrients may become necessary after 45 days of the first spray, if the drought condition continues to prevail.
- Shot hole borer incidence could be reduced by providing optimum shade, proper drainage, removal of affected branches and all the suckers at periodic intervals.
- For controlling mealybugs, build up shade in the open patches, spot application of pesticides and use of biocontrol parasitoids *Leptomastix dactylopii* could be adopted.
- For control of berry borer and black rot, the measures suggested for arabica may be adopted.
- Pepper could be grown as intercrop in coffee blocks.
- In estates with water facility, adopt wet method of processing for preparing parchment coffee for value addition.
- In case of cherry preparation, avoid heaping the fruits to prevent mould attack and dry on pucca drying yards. In the absence of pucca yards, polythene sheets should be used for drying coffee.