

VICARP R & D INFORMATION SHEETS

7 STEPS TO GROW COCONUT SEEDLINGS



Even when grown under similar conditions, coconut trees differ in nut production. This may be due to inherited differences in the seedlings.

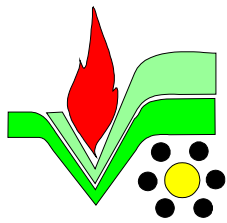
Therefore, seedlings should be carefully selected. Good seedlings will grow into high-yielding palms and live 50 years or longer.

Here are 7 simple steps to follow to make sure you get good seedlings for planting.

1. Select the Mother Palms

- Select seednuts from mother palms in a plantation that produces about 1,500 nuts per hectare every 45 days.
- A good mother palm
 - is 25 to 60 years old.
 - has rounded crown with 30 to 40 fronds.
 - has 40 to 50 full-size nuts.
 - has straight trunk with leaf scars close to each other.
 - is located far from houses, animal pens, and compost heaps.



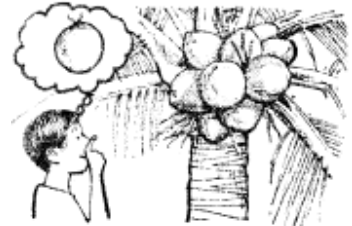


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2. Select the Seednuts

A good seednut is

- brown or partly brown when harvested.
- free from damage.
- round and medium in size.

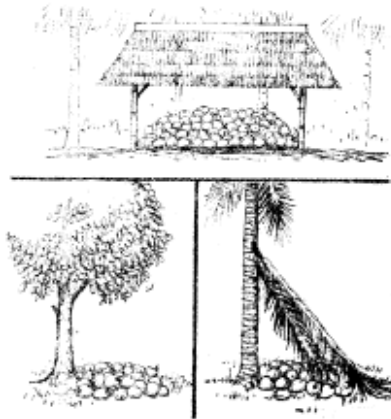


Will location of a nut in a bunch affect growth of seedling?

Answer: No.

3. Store the Seednuts

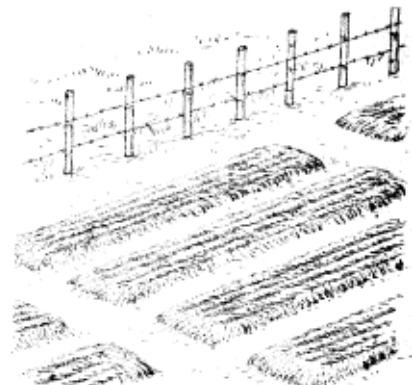
- Store partly brown nuts only.
- Store for about one month before putting them in a germination bed.
- Store seednuts in a shed or under an open shade.

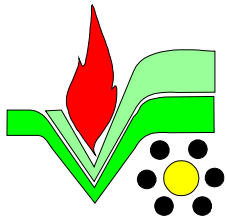


4. Plant and Take Care of Seednuts in the Germination Bed

To prepare the germination bed -

- select a level and well-drained area near a water source.
- remove weeds and stones.
- cultivate the soil until fine.
- prepare long elevated beds wide enough for 4 to 5 rows of nuts.

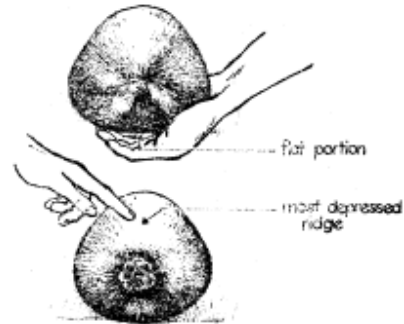




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When ready to plant -

- dig trenches on each bed deep enough to bury two-thirds of a nut.
- hold the nut and locate its flat portion.
- lay the nut on its flat portion in the trench.
- place the nuts horizontally and side by side in rows.



To take care of the nuts in the germination bed -

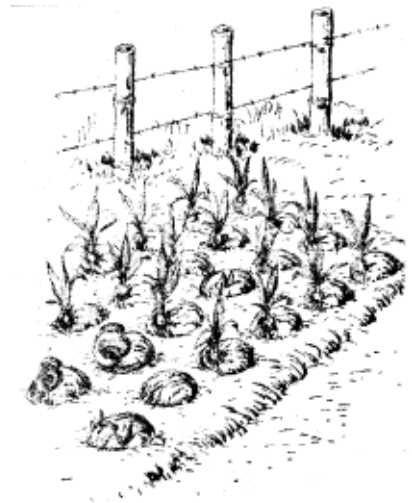
- protect the nuts from destruction.
- keep the beds free from weeds.
- water the nuts when necessary.
- watch for the seednuts to germinate after 8-10 weeks

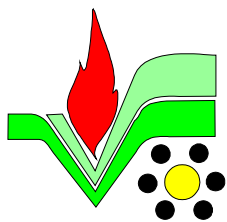


5. Transfer Germinated Nuts to the Nursery

When the seednuts germinate -

- transfer those with shoots (after 8 to 10 weeks) to the nursery.
- select only nuts with vigorous shoots.
- discard nuts that show the following defects:
 - white shoots
 - two or more shoots per nut
 - curly shoots
- continue to select and transfer germinated nuts once or twice a week for 3 months from sowing.
- use only the first 70 per cent of all the nuts sown.
- discard late-germinating nuts (after 3 months).





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Choose one of the two types of nursery.

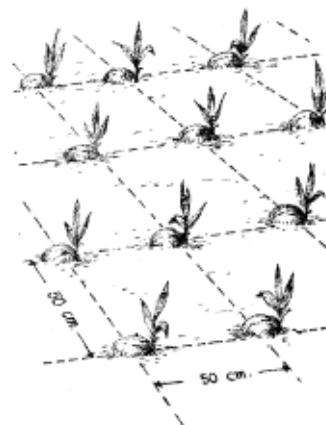
For a flat or slightly rolling field -

- use black polyethylene bags (48 x 46 x 0.015 cm).
- make holes at the bottom of bags for drainage.
- fill bags with light soil.
- place seedling in bag with shoot upward and bury two-thirds of the nut.
- arrange bags 30 to 40 cm apart on the ground.



For a rolling field or when polyethylene bags are not available -

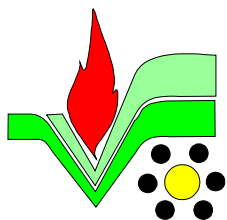
- select an area near the planting field and near a water source.
- select a well drained area with rich, friable soil.
- remove the weeds and stones.
- cultivate the soil until fine.
- plant germinated nuts on the ground 40 to 50 cm apart, with shoots upward and two-thirds of each nut buried.



6. Take Care the Seedlings

- Apply and mix with the soil 20 grams of ammonium sulfate and 20 grams of common table salt or muriate of potash to each seedling anytime during the first month.
- Apply and mix with the soil the same fertilizers but twice the amount 3 months after the first application.
- Protect the seedlings from destruction.
- Keep the nursery free from weeds.
- Water the seedlings when necessary.



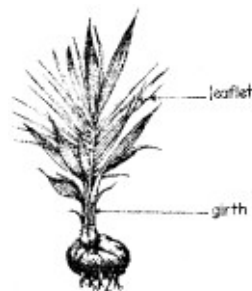


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7. Select Seedlings in the Nursery for Field Planting

When ready to plant in the field -

- select 6 to 12 month old seedlings. Younger seedlings will bear fruits earlier so do not delay planting.
- select the seedlings that:
 - are healthy and free from disease and insect damage.
 - have big girths.
 - have leaves that split early into leaflets.
- use only the best 85 percent of all the seedlings in the nursery. Discard the rest.



For seedlings grown directly on the ground -

- cut all the roots with a sharp shovel.
- hold the girth and pull out the seedlings slowly.

For seedlings grown in the polybags -

- transfer seedlings to the field in polybags.



Source: RCRC Farmer's Bulletin NM-01,5C,9/80
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ViSCA, Baybay, Leyte