

ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME INTRODUCED VARIETIES OF BANANA IN KERALA

Performance of nine varieties of banana, eight exotic and one indigenous, given in Table 1, was studied for two seasons at the Central Horticultural Research Station, **Ambalavayal**, since 1965. Results of the observations made on the plant characters and yields of the different varieties are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

| Variety | Country of origin | Plant life in months | Mean height of plant (cm) | Mean weight of bunch (Kg) | Mean no. of hands per bunch | Mean no. of fingers per bunch |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Anamalu</i> | Ceylon | 16-19 | 283 | 20.0 | 7.5 | 105.3 |
| <i>Bodies Alta Fort</i> | Jamaica | 14-17 | 347 | 25.0 | 8.3 | 131.8 |
| <i>Radja Siral</i> | Indonesia | 13-16 | 245 | 7.0 | 5.8 | 60.0 |
| <i>Radja</i> | -do- | 16-18 | 223 | 9.0 | 6.0 | 68.0 |
| <i>Pisang embun</i> (<i>Pisang ambon</i>) | Malayasia | 13-16 | 282 | 13.5 | 6.5 | 90.0 |
| <i>Manoranjitam</i> | India (Andhra Pradesh) | 16 | 290 | 11.0 | 7.0 | 100.00 |
| <i>Mas</i> | Indonesia | 20 | 284 | 11.5 | 10.0 | 167.0 |
| <i>Giant Governor</i> | Jamaica | 16-17 | 163 | 14.5 | 8.0 | 123.0 |
| <i>Kapok</i> | Indonesia | 17-18 | 277 | 7.5 | 6.0 | 88.0 |

It may be seen that the varieties *Bodies Alta Fort*, *Anamalu*, *Pisang embun* and *Giant Governor* rank high from the points of view of yield and quality. The varieties *Anamalu* and *Pisang embun* were found susceptible to infection by wilt and leaf-spot diseases.

The fruits of *Bodies Alta Fort* have the qualities of those of *Gros Michel* and weigh 22-30 Kg per bunch. This variety suckers well and its bunches resemble those of *Gros Michel*. But its fingers drop 3 to 4 days after ripening.

The *Giant Governor* which belongs to the *Cavendish* group is of medium height (150-165 cm) and its fruits weigh 12-16 Kg per bunch. In quality, it is only inferior to *Bodies Alta Fort*. The dwarf nature of the plant facilitates accommodation of more number of plants per acre. The fruits have good keeping qualities and the bunches are medium in size. The remaining varieties are inferior both in yield and quality.

Anamalu and *Pisang embun* are only synonyms of *Gros Michel*. *Bodies Alta Fort* is a hybrid, bred out in Jamaica between *Gros Michel* and *Pisang Lilin*. *Pisang Lilin* is an edible diploid. *Bodies Alta Fort* is a tetraploid, highly resistant to Panama disease (wilt), leaf-spot and eel worm. *Bodies Alta Fort* and *Giant Governor* are thus good commercial varieties suitable for Kerala.

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