

### 'MUTTOM VARIKKA'—a promising jackfruit variety

Jack fruit forms an important subsidiary food in Kerala. It provides for the poorer sections of the population a nutritious food material during the lean period of the year. When raw it is used as a vegetable and when ripe as a fresh fruit. A major handicap in the extension of its cultivation is the extreme variability in the quality and productivity of the seedling trees. The method to overcome this difficulty is adoption of dependable methods of vegetative propagation in multiplying known varieties.

The two groups of jack fruits generally recognised among seedling trees are 'Varikka' with crisp and sweet fruit bulbs and 'Koozha' with soft and fibrous bulbs. Even among these groups there are variations in characters.

Juvenility was recognised as a factor contributing to the success of air layering in jack (Srinivasan 1963). This principle was applied for propagation by layering a 'Varikka' variety of jack called 'Muttom Varikka'. The parent tree was selected from a locality (Muttom, Alleppey District, Kerala) which had a predominant Varikka population. Four young seedlings obtained from a single fruit of the parent plant were used for the air-layering. Anticipating that the resulting plants will be also Varikka with satisfactory features" Air-layering was done on these seedlings in August, 1967. After detaching the rooted layers in about 3 months, one of the layered plants was planted in the Agricultural College Farm, Vellayani, on 14-11-1967,

The first female inflorescences emerged in March 1970 when this tree was just 2 years and 4 months old. At the time of flowering the tree had attained a height of 7 metres and a maximum spread of 4 metres. Six female flowers were produced all of which set fruits and came to maturity. The fruits were harvested in the last week of August 1970. The mean figures of measurements for the fruits were :—

Total weight of a fruit	- 7.0 kg
Weight of fruit bulbs	- 3.6 kg
Length of fruit	- 46 cm
Width of fruit	- 23 cm

(See also Fig. 1 giving a section of the fruit)

The edible quality of the fruit was adjudged and found to be of a good quality 'Varikka'. The pulp of the fruit bulb was crisp, fleshy, non-fibrous and sweet and was golden yellow in colour. The fruit took 7 to 10 days for ripening and hence had good keeping quality. Trials on vegetative propagation

with this young tree gave 72% success in air-layering and 84% success in inarching with ordinary jack seedlings used as root-stock.

Thus, by virtue of precocity and good edible qualities 'Muttom Varikka' ranks high as a pedigree jack tree.

#### Reference

- Srinivasan, K. 1963. Juvenility as a factor affecting air-layering in Jack. *Agri. Res. J. Kerala* 1 (1): 1—3

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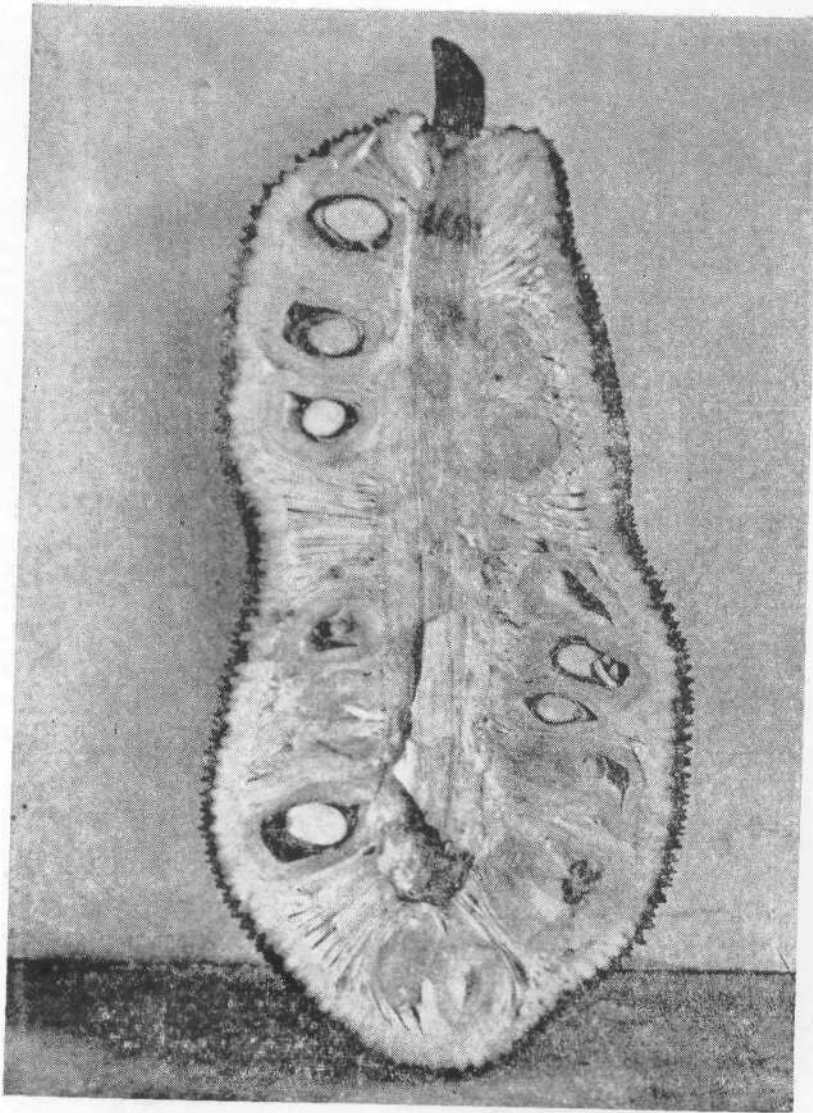


Fig. 1. 'Muttom Varikka' fruit, longitudinal section,