

Nu Wehung Tall (NWHT)

Ratnambal MJ, Kumaran PM, Bashkara Rao EVV, Pillai RV

Conservation

Nu Wehung Tall (NWHT) is conserved at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute in Kasaragod (Kerala), India.

History

Nu Wehung Tall was introduced to India from New Caledonia in 1968.

Identification

Like other Caledonian Talls, this variety is also a semi-Tall type. It grows up to 5.9 m with about 40 leaves. The stem girth at 1 m from the ground level is 86 cm. The number of leaf scars, measured from 1 to 2 m above ground level, is 28. The palm flowers 8 years after planting and produces 11-12 inflorescences per year. The inflorescence is medium-sized, 99 cm long with a short, but strong petiole of 39 cm. This variety is a semi-direct self-pollinating type because of the presence of inter-spadix overlapping (nearly 5-days duration) in about 60% of inflorescences. Fruits are oval to oblong in shape with high husk content. The husk is more towards the posterior end. The husked nut is flat at the posterior but pointed towards the bottom.

Yield and production

Fruiting starts nine years after planting. The palm produces about 49 fruits per year. Fruits are of medium-sized, weighing 667g. The nut without the husk weighs 388g. The kernel and shell are thin. The copra content is 133g per nut with 67% oil. The copra and oil yield in 1 ha are 1.1 t and 0.75 t, respectively.

Other information

This variety may be planted for toddy tapping. It is presently not being used in breeding work in India.

Reference

Ratnambal MJ, Nair MK, Muralidharan K, Kumaran PM, Bhaskara Rao EVV, Pillai RV. 1995. Coconut Descriptor Part I, CPCRI, Kasaragod, Kerala, India.

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Rangiroa Tall (RGT)

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Conservation

According to the 2002 Coconut Genetic Resources Database, Rangiroa Tall (RGT) is represented by 8 accessions totalling 466 living palms in the collections of Côte d'Ivoire, Jamaica, Malaysia, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It was sent from the Solomon Islands to Malaysia in the 1970s. In Vanuatu, the first introduction was decimated by *Helminthosporium* leaf spot. The two surviving palms have been crossed to maintain the variety.

History

Rangiroa is located in the Pacific Ocean, 355 km northwest of Tahiti, and is the largest atoll in the Tuamotu islands. It was discovered in 1616 by Le Maire and Schouten, and visited by Roggeven in 1722, but Rangiroa did not see its first European settlers, catholic missionaries, until 1851. It had slumbered for many years, but has now come back to life through the establishment of pearl farms and tourism.

Identification

Two populations have been introduced into Côte d'Ivoire from French Polynesia. The Tahitian Tall from the main island and the Rangiroa Tall, which were initially called Polynesia Tall No. 1 and No. 2. The main difference between the Tahitian Tall and the Rangiroa Tall lies in the greater susceptibility of the latter to *Helminthosporium* leaf spot. This leaf disease, caused by the fungus *Dreschlera incurvata*, leads to thousands of small dry, brownish spots on the leaflets. The fruits of the Rangiroa Tall also seem to vary more in shape. The final difference is not very visible: it involves the adaptation of these two varieties to very different soils, coral for the Rangiroa and volcanic on the high islands of Tahiti for the Tahitian Tall.

Yield and production

On the Rangiroa atoll in the 1960s, average yields of RGT were very low at 10 to 15 nuts per palm and around 200 to 250 kg of copra per ha. Yields of up to 1.6 t of copra per ha have been achieved with the same local Tall palms by correcting soil mineral deficiencies. In Côte d'Ivoire, this variety has been tested on sandy soils. The palms start bearing during their 6th year, with 13 fruits per palm per year; yields fluctuate between 24 and 62 fruits per palm per year (1 to 2.7 t of copra) up to 18 years. The Tahitian Tall planted in the same plot has produced up to 86 fruits in the same year, giving an average of 640 kg of copra more per ha. The fruits weigh 1240-1430g on average in Côte d'Ivoire depending on the planting year. The inner nuts weigh 890-940g. The 470-500g kernel gives 270-300g of copra when dried. In Rangiroa, the copra content of the nuts is 250g, on average, but large variations occur among the palms (150-400g). A record weight of 6.250kg has been recorded for a fruit in Vanuatu.

Other information

Experimental plots set up in 1959 on Rangiroa resulted in agronomic recommendations for good development of coconuts on an atoll. Little use has been made of RGT in breeding programmes worldwide. The Tahitian Tall is preferred as it is more resistant to diseases. Nevertheless, the hybrid between the Brazilian Green Dwarf and RGT was recommended on the coral soils of Polynesian islands. This hybrid is being tested at the Saraoutou Station in Vanuatu.

References

- Pomier M. 1967. Coconut research at Rangiroa. South Pacific Commission Technical Paper 153.
- Reboul JL. 1980. Coconut growing on coral soil. Regional technical meeting on atoll cultivation, Papeete, Tahiti. South Pacific Commission, Nouméa.

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