

Cameroon

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Country not member of COGENT
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Cameroon is a country of central western Africa. It is bordered by Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Cameroon's coastline lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.

Agriculture was the main source of growth and foreign exchange until 1978 when oil production replaced it as the cornerstone of growth for the formal economy. Agricultural development and productivity declined from neglect during the oil boom years of the early 1980s. Agriculture was the principal occupation of 56% of the economically active population in 2003, although only about 15.4% of the land was arable. The most important cash crops are cocoa, coffee, cotton, bananas, rubber, palm oil and kernels, and peanuts. The main food crops are plantain, cassava, corn, millet, and sugarcane. Palm oil production has shown signs of greater vigour, but the product is not marketed internationally. Cameroon bananas are sold internationally, and the sector was reorganized and privatized in 1987. Similarly, rubber output has grown in spite of Asian competition. Cameroon is now among the world's largest cocoa producers.

Although Cameroon is not a country member of COGENT, coconut varieties from Cameroon are conserved and used to produce coconut hybrids in COGENT member countries such as Benin (Sanoussi 2005) and Côte d'Ivoire (Bourdeix et al. 2005). Research in Agriculture is conducted in Cameroon by IRAD (Institute of Agricultural Research for Development), the University of Yaoundé and various international institutions such as CARBAP (Centre africain de recherche sur bananiers et plantains), PRASAC (Pôle régional de recherche appliquée au développement des savanes d'Afrique centrale) and IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture).

No research is currently undertaken on the Coconut palm in Cameroon, although the lethal yellowing disease of the coconut palm remains active in the southern coastal region (Dollet et al. 1977).

References

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Cameroon Kribi Tall (CKT)

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Conservation

Cameroon Kribi Tall (CKT) can be found in Cameroon, but until 2002, there was no recorded coconut germplasm bank in Cameroon where the lethal yellowing disease is active. The only other country where CKT can be found is Côte d'Ivoire, where 147 palms from rejuvenation were planted in 1982.

History

Cameroon is a country on the Gulf of Guinea, on the western coast of Africa. The town of Kribi is in southern Cameroon, less than two hours by road from Douala, the economic capital. The coconut palms bordering the beaches were introduced around 1890 by Presbyterian ministers from the island of Sao Tomé.

Identification

The CKT variety is typical of coconut palms on the coasts of West Africa. CKT has quite a slender stem, which begins with a discreet bole at the base. Often, the base of the stem is not rectilinear, curving slightly. The fronds are of average size with relatively broad leaflets. The palm reaches 5.5 m in height (from the ground to the base of the oldest living frond) ten years after planting. The fruits are green to brown and morphologically very similar to those of coconut palms in Côte d'Ivoire and Benin. They are elongated with distinct longitudinal ridges and quite frequently have a crease around the equator. They are poor in water and rich in husk. The fruit contains an ovoid nut with thick meat. However, the fruits of the Cameroon variety are around 9% lighter than those produced by Tall coconut palms originating from Côte d'Ivoire and Benin. Whole fruits weigh 895g on average, almost 42% of which is husk fibre. Inside, the oblong nut is small and weighs 417g, with 277g of kernel.

Yield and production

This variety is quite precocious and high yielding for a Tall type material, with a 9-10 year average of 1.8 t of copra per ha per year, while the other West African Tall coconuts from Côte d'Ivoire and Benin planted at the same time in the same plot do not exceed 1.4 t. Each palm produces an average of 12.8 bunches and 78 fruits per year at a planting density of 143 palms per ha.

Other information

In Cameroon, CKT proved susceptible to the so-called Kribi disease, a form of lethal yellowing. According to growers, the original disease focus was Equatorial Guinea. The disease occurred for the first time in 1937 at Ebodié, sparing a few palms, and then it spread by successive leaps, leaving zones of coconut palms several kilometres long free of the disease, but killing almost 90% of palms in the disease foci within two to three years. Following the losses caused by this disease, major replanting operations were implemented between 1945 and 1954. Given its resemblance to the varieties from Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, the Cameroon Kribi Tall has only undergone limited testing in varietal improvement programmes.

References

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