

Banana

Intercultural Operations

Weed Control

Regular weeding is important during the first four months. Spading is commonly used and normally four spadings a year are effective in controlling weeds. Integrated weed management by including cover crops, judicious use of herbicides, intercropping and hand weeding wherever necessary will contribute in increased production.

Pre-emergence application of Diuron (1kg a.i./ha) or Glyphosate (2 kg a.i./ha) is effective in controlling grasses and broad-leaved weeds without affecting the yield and quality of banana. Double cropping of cowpea is equally effective in suppressing the weed growth.

Intercropping

Intercropping can easily be raised in banana plantation at the early stages of growth. Vegetable and flower crops like radishes, cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, chilli, brinjal, lady's finger, gourds, marigold, and tuberose can be successfully grown as intercrop. Mixed cropping with arecanut coconut and cassava is a common and widely adopted practice in South India.

Desuckering

During the life cycle, banana produces number of suckers from the underground stem. If all these suckers are allowed to grow, they grow at the expense of the growth of the main plant and hence the growth of the sucker should be discouraged. Removal of unwanted suckers is one of the most critical operations in banana cultivation and is known as desuckering. Such suckers are removed either by cutting them off or the heart may be destroyed without detaching the sucker from the parent plant. Removal of suckers with a portion of corm at an interval of 5-6 weeks hastened shooting and increased the yield.

Earthing Up

In case of furrow planting earthing up should be done during rainy season to avoid water logging while during winter and summer the plant should be in the furrow.

Propping

Propping operation is carried out in areas with high wind speeds. Pseudostems are propped up with bamboo, especially, at the time of bunch emergence.

Leaf Removal

Pruning of surplus leaves helps to reduce the disease from spreading through old leaves. Leaf pruning can change light and temperature factors of microclimate. Pruning of leaves before bunch initiation delays flowering and harvesting cycle. For maximum yields a minimum of 12 leaves are to be retained.

Bunch Covering

Bagging (bunch covering) is a cultural technique used by planters where export quality bananas are grown. This practice protects bunches against cold, sun scorching, against attack of thrips and scarring beetle. It also improves certain visual qualities of the fruits. Bunch covering with dry leaves is a common practice in India.

Removal of Male Flower Bud

Removal of male bud after completion of female phase is necessary. Once the process of fruit setting is over, the inflorescence rachis should be cut beyond the last hand otherwise it grows at the cost of fruit development. This helps in early maturity of the bunch.