

Litchi

Propagation

Although litchi can be propagated asexually by various ways the most common and easiest method adopted all over the world is air-layering. Stooling method of propagation is becoming popular due to higher success rate as compared to air layering.

Air-layering

Air-layering or 'gootee' is widely accepted method of propagation in India. In this method a healthy and vigorous, upright twig of about one year old and 2.5 to 4 cm in diameter is selected. A circular strip of bark about 2 cm wide just below a bud is completely removed from the selected twig. Care should be taken to remove all the cambium tissue surrounding the white central wood while removing the bark. Moist sphagnum moss is packed around this portion and tied with polyethylene sheet, which prevents the loss of moisture. In about 6 weeks, when the roots are visible through the polythene wrap, the rooted branch is detached from the parent plant and potted in the nursery. Top of the branch is cut back to maintain a proper ratio of leaves: roots.

Stooling

It involves cutting a 2.5 years old litchi plant in the month of February at 25cm from the ground level. After a month 6-8 side shoots appear. Except one shoot all the other shoots are selected for stooling in the month of June. A ring of bark 3cm wide, 20cm from the tip of the shoots is removed. A paste of IBA (25mg) and Lanolin (10g) is applied to the ringed area. Ten days later, soil is mounded around the base of the newly developed shoots so as to cover 10-15 cm of the stem above the ring to encourage adventitious roots. This causes the shoots to root profusely in 2 months. The rooted shoots are separated from the mother plant in the month of September and immediately planted in nursery beds or pots. It is reported that the transplanted shoots have a survival rate of 81-82% as compared with 40%-50% in air-layers.