

Pineapple

Intercultural Operations

Weed Control

Hariyali and nutgrass are the common weeds in pineapple plantations. Weeding is important from the economic point of view. Hand weeding especially in closely spaced crop is cumbersome and uneconomic. Therefore chemical control of weed is advisable. Pineapple Research Station, Vellanikkara, Thrissur (Kerala), recommended application of Diuron at 3 kg /ha or combination of Diuron (1.5 kg/ha) + Bromacil (2.0 kg /ha) as pre-emergence spray. It should be repeated with half of the dose, 5 months after the first application (AICFIP, 1978)ICAR, Pineapple. Irrigation followed by the herbicide spray helps in carrying herbicides to the root zone of the weeds.

Earthing Up

Due to its shallow root system pineapple plants are prone to lodging. Lodging of plants during fruit development results in lopsided growth and uneven development of fruits. Hence earthing up is an important operation in pineapple cultivation, as it helps in promoting good anchorage to plants. It involves pushing soil into the trench from the ridge, where trench planting is common.

Mulching

Mulching is one of the cultural practices aimed at weed control and soil-moisture conservation. It is essential when pineapple is grown as a rainfed crop and is feasible where flatbed planting is followed. In South India, mulch of leaves or straw is spread on soil between the plants. However, use of black polythene film as mulch is equally beneficial.

Removal of Suckers, Slips and Crowns

Suckers start growing with the emergence of inflorescence while slips grow with developing fruits. Only one or two suckers are retained on the plant for ratooning while additional suckers and all slips are removed. This is essential as the growth of these may weaken plant and hinder fruit development. Desuckering can be delayed as much as possible since fruit weight was found to increase with increasing number of suckers per plant. Increased number of slips delayed fruit maturity; therefore they are removed as soon as they attain the size required for planting. Where early harvest is required slips are removed as and when they sprout. Removal of crown is not required as it mars appeal of fruit and also makes handling difficult. However in Kew variety, partial pinching of crown by removing the inner whorls of leaflets along with the growing tips one and half month after fruit set lead to increased fruit size (Prakash et al., 1983)ICAR Pineapple.

Ratoon Crop

In India, pineapple is retained for about three crops. The subsequent rotation crops are borne by the suckers given out by the original plant. Only two of these suckers should be retained and all others removed. Slips should also be removed. Plants should be fertilized and earthed up so that they can have good anchorage for ratoon crop.