



Deejay Farm for the best hybrid seedlings

Sona John

David Lobo, the founder of Deejay Group, one of the largest hybrid coconut breeding farms in the country learned from his father that there is only one way to do a job, the 'Best Way'.

Inspired by late Prof. Antony Davis, the pioneer in coconut breeding, Lobo decided to try his luck in coconut breeding. Lobo was determined and had blind faith in Prof. Antony Davis. He did the designing and planning and Lobo followed what he wanted to do and today he has his own hybrids. Lobo recalls that it took three to five years time to collect enough planting material.

The first planting of selected breeding stock was done in the year 1984 in 80 ha. located near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, and in the next three years Deejay hybrid seedling project covered an area of

200 acres with nearly 10,000 palms. The first hybrid seedling was produced in 1990 and with numbers increasing, there are now more than 1.5 million hybrids in the field.

Deejay has developed its own good mother palms that yield very early, yields large nuts and high yield. Its qualities are transferred to the hybrid and this mother palms give Deejay today the quality of hybrid which is flowering in one third the time and yielding three times of quantity. Over the years Deejay has developed a unique mother palm with specific characteristics that act synergistically in the progeny giving further improved productivity to the advantage of the coconut farmer. Deejay has developed three hybrids namely Deejay Sampoomna, Deejay Pushkala and Deejay Vishwas.

The parental varieties are from India only, many of which are not

in existence now. It is classified into groups and hence Deejay know the father and mother of their different lines they cross and produce the hybrids. The quality of the hybrids is the quality of the mother palms produced by Deejay. The father and mother of all mother palms is known to Deejay. Based on the advice of Prof. Davis, Deejay Coconut Project, used two varieties of dwarf palms of proven genetic potential with the necessary colour characteristics for quality control, as the female parent. With regard to the male parent, large numbers of seed material from selected Andaman Talls, Tiptur Talls, Nagarcoil Talls and West Coast Talls, were procured, planted in nurseries, selected for preferred characteristics and planted in the coconut breeding estate in Madurai.

Maximum selection procedure resulted in the best dwarf mother and the best tall father being

retained. Also, by using two dwarfs and four tall, Prof. Davis was able to ensure that the breeding garden would produce hybrids with better variability, vigour and capacity. These two factors of rigorous selection and proven genetic material have resulted in the DeeJay hybrid palm having excellent productivity.

DeeJay Dwarf as the female parent begins to flower within 18 months, and produces bunches with larger coconuts. These advantages have been absorbed into the DeeJay hybrid. Today there are over 10,000 dwarf mother palms in the DeeJay breeding programme.

At DeeJay Farm, the spathe is manually opened before it is fully matured. It is cut and opened, the male flowers are removed and is pollinated at the right time. According to Lobo, if you open the spathe too early, nuts wouldn't be mature, if you open it late, the pollens will spread. DeeJay is collecting and preserving the pollen grains in their own lab.

DeeJay's hybrids are having hybrid vigour and is performing better on the disease front and on the insect pest front better than the tall and dwarfs.

DeeJay employs modern and scientific methods of record keeping, selection procedure, technical inputs, hybridization techniques, pollen collection and preservation and on-going research. Specially developed computer software keeps the weekly records and tracks over 10,000 individual tree performances. DeeJay's quality control lab monitors pollen quality. Trained technical staff is responsible for the emasculation, for collecting the male flowers, process, separate and store the pollen as per



David Lobo

need. Harvesting of seed nuts, handling, storage and selection before planting in the nursery is done by staff with training. At DeeJay, everything possible is done

DeeJay Hybrid Field Performance

- High yields of 250 plus nuts average per annum
- Early flowering in 24 months
- Copra of 200 grams per nut
- Higher Oil content 68%
- 600 ml of sweeter water in the tender coconut
- 43750 Nuts per ha.
- 8750 kgs of copra per ha.
- 5950 kgs of oil per ha

Every adult parent palm is manually emasculated and pollinated for maximum productivity and every seedling is checked for quality before sale.

to ensure that the farmer gets a seedling that is a great hybrid of the highest quality.

Eventhough DeeJay is producing half a million seedlings a year, DeeJays hybrids are booked two

years in advance. The seedlings are mostly sold in Tamil nadu. Since the demand for DeeJay hybrid seedlings has outstripped the supply, DeeJay has started new seedling production centres, one each in Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Goa. More centres will be established, to ensure that the farmer does not have to wait. DeeJay is now producing half a million seedlings in an year. DeeJay's next year's production target is one million and in 6-7 years DeeJay's targetd yearly production would go upto two million seedlings. Most business houses would say that the purpose of business is profit, but DeeJay believes that the purpose of business is profit through service.

Since DeeJay's goal is to help farmers to generate more income, David Lobo is planning to venture into value addition. A project on producing coconut palm sugar from neera at Goa is his immediate future plan. Lobo is hopeful that this project which would be strated in an years time would save the farmers from the exploitation of middle men. Since tender coconut is having high demand, DeeJay is

Deejay Sampoorna

The Deejay Sampoorna Hybrid is the result of more than 25 years of meticulous scientific expertise using the finest breeding stock from around the world.

Features

- Ideal general purpose hybrid
- Early yielder - first flowering within 24 months after planting
- Large number of nuts - upto 250 nuts per annum per tree



- When harvested for tender coconuts, yield improves by approx 30% - 400 tender nuts per annum reported by some customers
- The tender coconut at 7 months contains 500ml of sweet coconut water
- Good kernel and copra content - approx. 200grams per nut
- Approx. 8,750 kgs of copra per annum per hectare
- Approx. 5 tonnes of coconut oil per hectare

planning for tender coconut processing. This project is expected to commence in two years time.

Deejay provides after sales service to all its customers in guiding them with timely management practices and through personal visits

Deejay Pushkala

This Deejay Pushkala hybrid is the result of several years of field evaluation. These hybrid seedlings are specially produced for tender coconut purpose and will be the perfect answer for the ever growing tender coconut market needs. These seedlings will be the preferred choice to supply tender coconuts to the processing industries.



Features

- Ideal hybrid for tender coconut water
- Early yielder - flowering within 26 months after planting.
- Large number of nuts-350 tender nuts per annum reported by customers
- The tender coconut at 7 months contains more than 600ml of sweet coconut water
- Premium selling price for tender coconuts.

to customer's farms to identify shortfalls and to suggest corrective action. A detailed management guide is provided to all customers which will serve as a guide as well as an accurate record of performance.

David Lobo believes in the spirit of innovation. He further believes

Deejay Vishwas

The Tall cultivar parent used in producing the Deejay Vishwas Hybrid coconut palm is one of the highest yielding talls growing in sub-optimum conditions. If you wish to produce more nuts per palm, sweet tender coconut water, quality copra and oil.



Features

- Excellent general purpose hybrid
- Early flowering and fruiting
- Very high yields of nuts per hectare
- Ideal Quantity of 300ml of tender coconut water
- High copra & oil production

that a sale is not complete until the customer gets the anticipated benefits. He ardently believes that his profit must be the legitimate reward for the services rendered to society.

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