WINTERING, REFOLIATION AND FLOWERING PATTERN OF DIFFERENT *HEVEA* CLONES IN GARO HILLS OF MEGHALAYA

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The present study was undertaken at the Ganolgre Research Farm under the Regional Research Station, Rubber Research Institute of India, Tura, Meghalaya. Ten clones were included in this study. Three trees per clone were selected randomly and the pattern of defoliation and refoliation was recorded. Maturity of new flushes, date of onset of flowering, fruiting, maturity of the fruits and seed germination of individual clones were also recorded. Data showed that the wintering characters were mainly influenced by the prevailing climatic conditions of the region. The clones showed varying trends in wintering, refoliation, maturity of new flushes, flowering and fruit maturity characteristics over the years. In general, the RRII clones showed early wintering followed by RRIM 600 and RRIM 605; whereas Gl 1 and GT 1 showed late wintering, refoliation, maturity of new leaves, flowering, fruiting and fruit maturity characteristics.

Keywords: Flowering pattern, Fruit set, Seed maturity, Refoliation, Wintering

Wintering is the most common and unavoidable phenomenon of the Para rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) tree. It generally occurs from the month of December and continues upto the month of February in the non-traditional as well as traditional rubber growing areas. The rubber tree has one main flowering season annually, though in some locations there can be minor secondary flowering as well which has been observed in Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Wintering depends upon the clone, age of the plants, seasonal factors and location (George *et al*., 1967; Priyadarshan *et al*., 2001). Wintering pattern in different rubber clones varies from complete defoliation followed by refoliation to simultaneous shedding and flushing (Webster and Paardekooper, 1989). In India, clones exhibit different patterns of defoliation, refoliation, flowering and maturity of the seeds as reported by George *et al*. (1967) and Soman *et al*. (1995) in the traditional regions, and Meenattoor *et al*. (1989) and Vinod *et al*. (1996) in the non-traditional regions. Various characters like defoliation, refoliation and flowering depend upon the clone and prevailing agro-climatic conditions of a particular rubber growing area (Meenattoor *et al*., 1989). The main problems being faced by the *Hevea*

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