

COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT PLANTING TECHNIQUES OF *HEVEA* IN TRIPURA

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Conventional brown budded stumps, two year old brown budded stumps grafted at one year's stock growth and allowed to grow without cutting back, two year old budded stumps grafted at two years stock growth and green budded stumps raised in polybags for two months and 14 months were compared for field establishment and early growth at Tripura conditions. Fourteen months old green budded polybag plants performed better than the others with respect to plant height and number of flushes of leaves at nine months growth and girth throughout the period of study. The conventional budded stumps initially did not show good performance, but in subsequent years the difference in girth narrowed down and there was no significant difference between different treatments, except 14 month old green budded polybag plants. From the establishment point of view, the best performance was for the two months old polybag plants. Under conditions of best management, budded stumps could be used as successfully as small polybag plants.

Key words: *Hevea brasiliensis*, Planting technique, Tripura.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects in plantation management is shortening the unproductive phase so that early return from investment is ensured. Rubber being a crop with comparatively long gestation period, thrust should be on reducing the immature phase. This is particularly important in the non-traditional regions where the cultivation is extended against odds such as marginal situations, other agroclimatic features and unskilled management. Planting technique and early management practices count a lot in the establishment, early growth and uniformity of stand in the plantation from the beginning to the mature phase. Advanced planting material like polybag plants have been known to reduce immaturity

period by six to nine months and choice of the right type of planting materials is thus important.

Sivanadyan *et al.* (1973) have reported that while budded stumps took 69 months to attain maturity, large polybag plants took only 60 months in Malaysia. Shepherd (1967) reported that polybag plants at two whorl stage had an immaturity period of 59 months only compared to field brown budded plants which had about 67 months of immaturity. Similar results were also reported by Pushpajah and Haridas (1977). In the traditional rubber growing region of India, Potty (1983) reported that at 78 months 73 per cent of polybag green budded plants of two to three whorl stage attained tappable girth, while it was only 39.5 per cent in the case of