

Button Shedding in Coconut

Recognize the problem

Premature button shedding is a very common problem observed on coconut. Buttons can be shed after fertilization and some nuts are shed after setting. This is not due to a single cause but may be due to combination of one or more factors. The economic loss ranges from 10 to 20%.

Background

Shedding of buttons and premature nuts may be due to one or more of the following: excess acidity or alkalinity, poor drainage facilities, severe and prolonged drought, genetic disorders, insufficient nutrients, improper pollination, hormone deficiency, insect pests or poor management practices.

Management

The following remedial measures can be followed to effectively manage this problem:-

- **Rectification of soil pH**-Excess acidity or alkalinity of soil may cause button shedding. If the soil pH is less than 5.5, the soil is too acidic. This could be overcome by adding lime. High alkalinity is indicated by soil pH higher than 8.0. This situation could be managed by adding gypsum.
- **Lack of nutrition**-Button shedding can occur as a result of inadequate manuring. The recommended dose of manurial schedules and proper time of application are important to minimise the button shedding. Soil application of 1.3 Kg urea, 2 Kg of Single Super Phosphate and 2 Kg of potash, mixed with 50 Kg of farmyard manure per palm. This can be followed by root feeding of Coconut tonic @ 40 ml in 160 ml of water per palm once in 6 months which will control the button shedding and enhance the yield.
- **Irrigation management**- Button shedding will be severe during March-April. Severe drought and / or insufficient irrigation aggravate the problem. Soil mulching with green fronds reduces evapo-transpiration and conserves soil moisture. Ensuring sufficient irrigation during summer and drainage during winter will lead to a sustainable yield.
- **Hormone deficiency**- Apply 0.5 ml of NAA (Planofix) mixed in 1 litre of water on the inflorescence. This prevents button shedding.
- **Pests and Diseases**- When young buttons are formed sucking pests start infesting which in turn attracts secondary fungal infections. Apply the recommended plant protection measures to ward off the problem.
- **Boron deficiency or crown chokes disorder**: Apply 200g of borax/palm/year in two splits.

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Button shedding in coconut. (Photo by TNAU Agritech Portal)



The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



Authors: S. Malarvannan
MSSRF
tel: 09444205262 email: malar@mssrf.res.in

Edited by Plantwise