

Special Operations for Scientific Banana Cultivation

(Under KRISHI KALYAN ABHIYAN)



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i) De-suckering / Pruning

- One mother plant and two followers method is recommended
- Keeping too many suckers, plants will reduce yields.
- It is advisable to remove all suckers once the desired followers have been selected
- An age interval of 2 months between the mother plant and subsequently each of the followers is most desirable, as these followers will become main stem after the mother plant fruits.
- The most effective method to permanently remove unwanted suckers is to cut the stem off the ground and then cut into the centre of the plant.



ii) Propagation

- The alternative of pruning is propagation of bananas. Instead of destroying the suckers, suckers can be removed from the clump and replanting it in a newly cultivated land.
- Large suckers called the “sword sucker” are the preferred as planting material.
- When removing the suckers, it must be cut into the mother plant enough to unearth some roots.
- Leaves are often removed in the process for easy transportation and re-planting.
- These suckers must be re-planted within a day or two and should not be exposed to the sun.

iii) Deflowering

- Remove the “Bell” (the purple flower petals at the end of the bunch – also known as “*banana blossom*” or “*banana heart*”).
- This is generally practiced because this way, Banana plant will conserve its energy into growing bigger bunch and not longer stalk.



iv) Pruning of leaves

- Old leaves and infected leaves should be pruned regularly.
- This will reduce the livelihood of leaf diseases and keeps the plantation tidy.
- Furthermore, it provides natural mulch to the Banana plants.



v) Earthing up

- Soil level should be raised after 3 months of planting to keep soil loose.
- This will also help prevent Banana plants from falling due to severe wind.

vi) Removal of female hands

- Remove the last one (1) to two (2) hands of the bunch.
- Banana growers often remove the bottom female hands so that the remaining hands grow bigger as it facilitates fruit development and increases bunch weight.

vii) Bunch Covering

- Bunch covering increases the weight and enhances quality of fruit.
- Traditionally, Banana growers protect the bunch from sunburn by placing dry leaves on the top hand of the bunch but this is not practical during rainy season and can be time consuming.
- Commercial growers however, use blue plastic sleeves. This practice is to protect Banans from insects, sunburn, diseases, spray residue, dust and birds.
- Covering the Banana bunch increases the temperature within which helps in early maturity.



viii) Propping

- Banana also vulnerable to being blown over due to the weight of the stem of fruit. Thus, Propping should be done during the last few months of its life cycle before harvest
- Banana plants should be supported with bamboos.
- Banana plants often go off balance due to the heavy weight of the bunch.
- Therefore, two bamboos should be propped by placing one against the top of the bunch and the other against the stem on the leaning side.
- Propping by using only one bamboo is not advisable as the Banana plant may plunge to the other direction during strong wind.

