



FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES

CURRY LEAF

Murraya koenigii

Rutaceae

Curry leaf (*Murraya koenigii*) is an important perennial tree vegetable. Its leaves are used mainly to improve the taste and flavour of foods. Leaves are slightly pungent and retain their flavour even after drying. Ground curry leaf with mature coconut kernel and spices forms an excellent preserve. It grows wild in the foothills and plains of the Himalayas from Kumaon to Sikkim. In south India, especially in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, at least one curry leaf plant is found in each homestead. Recently it has gained importance as a commercial crop. It is cultivated commercially in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is also cultivated in West Bengal, Assam and Deccan Plateau.

Climate and soil

Curry leaf can be cultivated in a wide range of soils. Red sandy loam soil is ideal for its cultivation. It can tolerate temperature up to 37°C. But below 16°C, its growth is affected.

Varieties

There are 2 improved varieties of curry leaf - DWD 1 and DWD 2. Both of these have a good aroma. They have an oil content of 5.22% and 4.09% respectively. They are mainly cultivated in Karnataka. DWD 1 is sensitive to winter season. During winter its growth is poor, whereas DWD 2 is winter insensitive. It gives higher yield than DWD 1. 'Senkaampu' is a local cultivar grown in many parts of Tamil Nadu.

Cultivation

Propagation

Curry leaf is mainly propagated through seeds. For raising seedlings, well-ripe fruits are collected from high-yielding plants. The seeds are sown either in nursery or polybags filled with a mixture of 1:1:1 sand, soil and farmyard manure. Seeds germinate in 3 weeks. One-year-old seedlings are planted in the main field.

It can also be propagated by root suckers. There are a number of root suckers near its plants. They are separated from the main plant during rainy season and planted immediately in the main field.

Planting

Planting in the main field is done during the monsoon season. The main field is ploughed thoroughly. Pits of 30cm × 30cm size are dug at a spacing of 4m × 4m. Farmyard manure @ 10kg/pit is applied.

Manuring and fertilization

Usually curry leaf plant is not given inorganic fertilizers. But for higher yields, its plant may be given 10kg farmyard manure and NPK @ 60:80:40g/plant/year. The

fertilizers may be applied at the onset of the monsoon.

Aftercare

The pit should be irrigated if there is no rain. The plant should be irrigated at 3-day intervals, if there are no rains. The field should be kept weed free. The plants should be trained and pruned to maintain a height of 1m. Their terminal buds are removed to encourage lateral branching. A minimum of 5–6 branches are kept per plant.

Harvesting and Post-harvest management

Curry leaves are picked 15 months after planting. Commercial harvest can be started from 3 year old plants. With good management, normal yield can be obtained up to the age of 20–25 years. The leaves can be harvested at two and a half to three months intervals, the average yield being 20–25 tonnes/ha.