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PIGEON PEA RATOONING - AN AID TO BREEDERS

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In pigeonpea great variation exists in the character days to flower, and breeders have difficulty in making crosses between different maturity groups because of the wide diversity in flowering periods. To achieve such crosses, staggered planting is often used. At ICRISAT, a large number of crosses were attempted involving lines having as diverse maturity periods as 82-171 days to flower. In staggered planting, parents planted late did not grow well. Much better results were obtained when the blooming period of parents planted at the normal date was prolonged by pruning. Pruning the plants above the height of the basal branches after harvest of the first crop resulted in rapid regrowth. In early varieties the newly-formed branches produced flowers and pods.

From crosses made in 1974-75 it was possible to compare the degree of success of the same parents before and after ratooning. Where both parents of the cross were early, success was 14.39% (46,097 pollinations) and 35.50% (600 pollinations) on non-ratooned and ratooned plants respectively. Where early X medium parents were used the average success was 20.08% (8116 pollinations) for ratooned and 9.63% (38.034 pollinations) non-ratooned parents. Within these crosses the percent success on the early parents was 29.02 (6838 pollinations) for ratooned and 8.26 (12,094 pollinations) for non-ratooned, and on the medium maturity parents 11.13 (1278 pollinations) for ratooned and 11.00 (25,940 pollinations) for non-ratooned.

On ratooned plants, particularly with early maturing types, comparatively less flower drop was observed than on non-ratooned plants. It was possible with the higher percentage of pod set to make crosses involving less time and labor.

An obvious advantage of using ratooned plants in crossing is that they can be observed throughout the season and then used in crosses after harvest of the normal crop. Studies are in progress on the grain and forage yield of ratooned plants, but this report is concerned only with the use of such plants in a crossing program.

NOTES AND NEWS

New use for soybeans

A student at the Home Economics Training Centre, Kwara State, Nigeria, has found a new way of preparing soybeans so that they can be incorporated into traditional foods. The method involves fermentation and the product, besides being a highly nutritious and cheap way of supplementing the family diet, has an added advantage: it can be used to replace "Iru", a local soup thickener made from fermented locust bean (Parkia sp.), the supply of which has been dwindling while the cost has been rising. The recipe is reproduced below:

Cover soybeans with boiling water and allow to boil for 30 minutes. Remove from fire and wash beans thoroughly to remove the seed coats. Place beans in cold water to cover, bring slowly to the boil and boil for 2 hours. Drain off excess water. Line a clean basket with large, clean leaves, empty the hot soybeans into the basket and cover with more leaves. Cover basket with a tray or calabash. Leave in a warm place - preferably near a fire. After 48 hours the "Iru" is ready for use.