

INTRODUCTION

The vegetative propagation of plants is usually resorted to as a means of propagating or increasing certain stocks possessing high productivity, disease resistance or other desirable characters. Coffee, like many tropical tree crops, has largely been grown from casually selected seed but recently with increasing land prices, labour costs and narrower profit margins the need for greater yields per unit area has been realised, and attention directed towards the yields of individual bushes. Field surveys of seedling plantations, Perkins, J.F. (1948) have shown that 10% of the trees in such plantations are uneconomic, and that in any one year 66% of the crop is carried by 25% of the trees.

Improved cultural methods, use of fertilisers, disease control etc. can increase the cropping performance of a plantation but before the grower can be certain that these practices are justified he has to possess trees that have the ability to crop at the much higher levels necessary for an economic return on his increased expenditure. The most rapid and certain method of improving the cropping potential of a plantation is by the planting of clonal plants propagated from proven high yielding trees present in a seedling population.

The object of this trial was to discover a cheap, economic method of propagating clonal coffee once the high yielding trees had been found. The most suitable mode of approach to the problem was thought to be through the techniques used to propagate clonal cocoa, and modified if necessary.