

SWEET POTATO GROWING IN TRINIDAD (Peasant Production).

Introduction.

The Sweet Potato, a perennial plant, usually grown as an annual, belongs to the large and widely distributed order of plants called convolvulaceae or Morning Glory Family. As is the case with many plants, the country of its origin is rather vague. Some authorities favour China, whilst others favour America. The latter country is the more probable since far more species have been found in America than in China.

The plant is a trailing vine which strikes roots at its joints and bears leaves of various shapes according to the variety. The appearance of the vines vary with different varieties, some have a trailing habit whilst others have a bushy habit of growth. The tint, hairiness, and venation of the leaves also vary in different varieties and afford a means of identification. The Sweet Potato itself, is botanically a swollen root usually called a 'tuber'. There is a great variation in size, shape, colour of skin and flesh amongst the different varieties. This will be demonstrated below when descriptions of the individual varieties are given.

The Sweet Potato is a very important food crop in Trinidad. It is grown throughout the whole colony. The cultivation of this crop is mostly in the hands of the small peasants. The information in the first part of this dissertation was obtained by visiting the individual farmers and discussing the various points with them. The figures for costings are open to criticism as they differ in different parts of the island according to the size of bank and number of weedings. The figures for costing were those obtained from two different sources and may be taken as an average for the colony.