



Drumstick

(*Moringa oleifera*)

Season	The optimum temperature for better growth is 20-25 ⁰ C. it is highly susceptible to frost and high temperature (> 40 ⁰ C) causes flower shedding.
Variety	Common in islands: Local, PKM 1 (other type : Jaffna, Moolanoormurangai, Chavakacherimurangai, Chemmurangai, Palmurangai, Kodikalmurangai, Kattumurangai, Palamedumurangai)
Soil	It grows well in almost all types of soil except stiff clays, however sandy loam soils containing lime is best suited for its cultivation.
Sowing time	Round the year with avoiding the heavy rains and excess dry days.
Propagation	Perennial type and are propagated by limb cuttings. Limb cuttings of 90-100 cm length and 5-8 cm diameter are used for planting. Annual types are propagated by seeds and 625 g seeds are sufficient for one hectare. The seedlings should be raised in polythene bags and transplanted in May- June or November - December months.
Planting	The seeds can be either sown in situ in the prepared pits of 45 cm ³ or can be transplanted after raising the seedlings in the polybags. The seedlings are ready for transplant in 40 - 45 days after sowing. Gap filling is necessary for efficient use of land resources. High density planting, planting on farm border or homegardens or road avenues or planting in community land is suggested for increasing drumstick production.
Soil preparation	Two to three ploughing of field should be done. Prepare pits of 45 x 45 x 45 cm at prescribed distance and fill the pits with 10 kg of FYM.
Spacing	Seedlings or limb cuttings are planted in well prepared pits of 45 cm ³ at a spacing of 2 X 2.5 m for annuals and 6.0 x 6.0 m for perennials.
Irrigation	It should be given at regular intervals of 2-3 days, later on irrigation is done once in 10-15 days.
Intercultural operations	Hand weeding is a common practice. When the seedlings reach 75 cm height, the shoot tips are to be nipped off to encourage side branches. The annual plants should be cut back two meter height from ground level for rationing before onset of monsoon. The rationed plants develop new shoots and bears flower and fruits after four to five month. Around three crops can be taken from this method. After rationing, apply 100 g Urea, 100 g Super phosphate and 50 gm MOP with 10-15 kg of FYM in basin of 1 meter periphery and irrigate it.
Manuring	Application of 10-12 tonnes/ha of Farm yard manure.
Fertiliser	Apply 100 g Urea, 100 g Super phosphate and 50 gm MOP and irrigate heavily during transplanting. Top dress plants with 100 g Urea again 3 months after first application. Every year apply manures and fertilizer during last phase of rains.
Disease/pest	No major disease or pest is observed in islands.
Harvesting	The fruits are ready for harvest 60 days after flowering, the period extends 2-3 months.
Yield	200-250 fruits/tree/year in annual types, in perennial types, the yield will be generally low (80-90 fruits/tree/year) in the first two years. Then it increases to about 500-600 fruits/tree/year.