

# Nutmeg

Condition of soil	Clay loam soil, sandy loam and red laterite soils are ideal for its cultivation.
Propagation	Seed, epicotyl grafting
Nursery	Naturally split, healthy fruits harvested during June – July are used for raising nursery. The seeds are extracted from the pericarp and sown immediately in sand beds of convenient length, 1-1.5 m breadth and 15 cm height. Regular watering is necessary for good germination. The germination commences from 30 – 90 days after sowing. About 20 days old sprouts are transplanted to polythene bags containing a mixture of top soil, sand and well-decomposed cow dung in 2: 2: 1 ratio. About 18–24 months old seedlings are used for transplanting in the field.
Planting	The planting in the main field is done at the onset of rainy season. A spacing of 6 – 7 m appears to be adequate. For graft 5mx5m spacing is optimum. Pits of 0.75 m x 0.75 m x 0.75 m size are dug and filled with organic manure and soil 15 days earlier to planting. The plants should be shaded in the early stages to protect from sun scorch. Permanent shade trees are planted when the site is on a hilly slope when nutmeg is grown as a monocrop. It can best be grown as an intercrop in old coconut gardens, where light shade conditions are suitable. Nutmeg requires irrigation in summer.
Manuring	Manures are applied in shallow trenches dug around the plants. A dose of 20 gm N (40 g urea), 18 gm P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> (100 g rock phosphate) and 50 gm K <sub>2</sub> O (80 g Murate of potash) per tree per year during the initial year and 500 gm N (1090 g urea), 250 gm P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> (1380 g rock phosphate), and 100 gm K <sub>2</sub> O (1670 g Murate of potash) per tree in subsequent years for a fully grown up tree of 15 years or more is recommended. Manuring twice a year, first in May as pre-monsoon and second in November as post monsoon application.
After care	Nutmeg can be grown as an intercrop in coconut, clove, arecanut & coffee gardens. Regular mulching of plant basins after slashing weeds and shading in summers in the early years are very essential. Banana can be raised for shade in early growth phase of nutmeg 1 m away from it on three sides.
Irrigation	Nutmeg needs sufficient water for its growth, requiring irrigation in summer season.
Harvesting	The female nutmeg tree starts fruiting from 6 <sup>th</sup> year onwards. The peak

	<p>harvesting period reaches after 20 years. The fruits are ready for harvesting, 9 months after flowering. Flowering and harvesting continue throughout the year. But June – August is the peak period. The fruits ripen and become ready for harvesting when their peri-carp splits open. Harvesting is done by a bill hook.</p>
Post harvest management	<p>The fruits are split open, the outer fleshy portion is removed, and the mace is manually separated from the nut. The nuts and mace are dried separately mace gradually becomes yellowish brown and brittle when drying is completed. The fresh peri-carp can be used for making pickles, jams &amp; jellies.</p>
Pest and disease	<p>Stem borer and mealy bug infestation can be controlled by spraying with solution of 0.5 ml dimethoate in 1 litre of water. Scale insects can be controlled by spraying with monocrotophos 36 EC (0.5 ml per litre of water.</p>