

5. Husks Vs. Coir Dust.

It is sometimes asked whether it is not a more economic proposition to sell husks to the mills and use the equivalent returned coir dust on the estate. This is based on a lack of understanding of the properties to which husks owe their agricultural values. Coir dust has little manurial value compared to husks, as all the potash has been leached in the process of retting. Further, coir dust should not be buried in trenches as it tends to get caked up and also favours the formation of a dense mat of fibrous roots.

6. Use and Misuse of Husks on Water-logged Land.

It is a common sight to find water-logged land, particularly round Chilaw and Madampe, where the drains are filled with husks. As the object of the drains is to remove excess water and lower the water-table, refilling with husks would only defeat the purpose of draining.

On the other hand husks can be used with advantage on such lands to raise the ground level round the palms and thereby lower the water-table and increase the effective range for root development. This can be done by placing a layer of husks, with the convex sides facing upwards, and covering with silt removed from the drains. In extreme cases of permanent water-logging drains are cut between all the rows leaving a raised platform round the palms. This method is no doubt expensive but produces excellent results.

ENTOMOLOGICAL NOTES.

Inquiries are often made to the Entomologist Division in reference to the control of insect pests with very meagre or no details of the type of damage, or of what the infested crop is, and seldom, if ever, are any specimens of the pest submitted.

Without the guidance of specimens of the pest, and full details of the crop attacked and the degree of infestation, it is often impossible to tender any definite advice.

Hard-bodied insects, such as beetles, bugs, &c., can be forwarded in a small bottle with methylated spirit. Never send specimens loose in an envelope as such are liable to arrive in too crushed a condition to permit of any identification whatsoever.

Caterpillars and other such-like insect bodies should, whenever possible, be forwarded in a small box or well-perforated tin with some of the native food plant; they should never be sent in an air-tight tin, as they will only arrive rotten in such cases.

Insects such as moths, &c., are best folded in paper, and sent packed flat in a closed tin, or other similar container.

PLANTERS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS
FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE GAZETTE.