

TRAINING OF MULBERRY PLANTS FOR SERICULTURE

M. I. Sheikh*

With systematic training, the size and shape of the plants of mulberry and the number of branches is controlled and the size and quality of the leaves remains consistent and it is possible to estimate the annual quantity of leaf crop from a given area.

Types of Training

There are various methods of classifying types of training but it is common to classify by the height cut of the main tree trunk. Low cut (30 cm), medium cut (50–80 cm) and high cut (80–100 cm) based on the height of the tree trunk are common methods.

The Technique of Training

The following sequence of operations is usually followed:

- (i) The stem of the planted sapling is pruned upto the required height of the trunk, viz. 30, 60 or 90 cm. It becomes the main trunk of the tree. During the year only 3 branches are allowed to grow from the upper part of the main trunk.
- (ii) Early in the spring in the second year, the 3 branches are pruned about 20 cm above main trunk and many young shoots are allowed to sprout from these 3 branches.
- (iii) All branches which grew in the second or third year are pruned at the base after harvesting is completed.
- (iv) Harvesting of leaves is started the next year.
- (v) Pruning of branches is always done at the base every year leaving the short part which gradually grows thick and takes the form of a human fist. The process is repeated every year.

Study conducted in the PFI, Peshawar

With a view to developing some techniques for moriculture 864 plants of three different sizes, viz. 30, 60 and 90 cm length were planted at 2 x 2 m spacing in 6 replications. In all there were 144 plants in each replication, 48 plants of each of the 3 sizes. Planting was done in the first week of February and sprouting of the plants was complete by the middle of March. Only 5 plants out of 864 failed to sprout which were re-stocked with the plants available in polythene bags already reserved for this purpose.

Two hoeings were given with the Chinese tractor – one in April and the other in May.

* Director General, Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar.

The plants were irrigated twice a month except from October to January, giving 10 cm depth of water in one irrigation. To suppress the weeds and grasses Berseem was sown in the first year which proved to be quite effective. Following data were available after two years:

Treatments

Replications	High Cut		Medium Cut		Low Cut	
	No. of shoots	Average length of shoots (M)	No. of shoots	Average length of shoots (M)	No. of shoots	Average length of shoots (M)
I	72	1.9	63	2.2	74	1.7
II	70	1.9	67	2.1	70	1.8
III	74	1.9	58	2.3	73	1.7
IV	86	1.9	62	2.2	68	1.8
V	71	1.9	65	2.1	65	1.8
VI	72	1.9	62	2.2	65	1.7
Average	74	1.9	63	2.2	70	1.8

Treatments are non-significant. Average yield of leaves from all the treatments was 2 Kg/plant. Since it is rather difficult to pick up leaves from high cut plants adoption of low and medium cuts is recommended.