

2009

February

Re-evaluation of Controlled Pruning in Young Rubber in a Large Group of Estates*

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The controlled pruning technique as advocated by the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia based on studies on older clones, namely RRIM 600 and GT1, was adopted by a large group of estates after some slight modifications.

However some practical problems were encountered with implementation of the system, due mainly to shortage of labour. These included suppression of terminal growth caused by the clustering effect of branches, large unsightly scars due to delay in pruning and much labour and cost involved.

In the light of the above and also in view of newer and more vigorous clones currently being planted by the industry, controlled pruning was re-evaluated in comparison with flushed pruning. The re-evaluation was carried out on modern clone RRIM 2024.

After the 18th, 24th, 36th and 48th month, controlled pruning showed 7 per cent, 4 per cent, 2.2 per cent and only 1.6 per cent correspondingly better than flushed pruning. The comparatively improving growth in the flushed pruning treatment with the passage of time was due to the expanding canopies after branches were left unpruned from above a height of 250 cm from the ground. At the 24th month, drip-line of canopies was 20 per cent wider in flushed pruning compared with controlled pruning.

Controlled pruning required from 18 to 24 rounds of pruning compared with five to six rounds for flushed pruning. When pruning rounds were delayed in controlled pruning, branches turned brown in colour and caused large scars to form when pruned.

Overall, controlled pruning did not confer greater girth advantage over flushed pruning, especially on modern vigorous clones.

Keywords : *Controlled pruning, flushed pruning, re-evaluation, older clones, modern clones.*