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NARO

Tea Production and associated constraints in Western Highlands Agro-Ecological Zone of Uganda



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Tea is among the priority cash crops in Uganda and in 2011 it second foreign income earner. It is grown in the western, central and south-western agro-ecological zones.

Important tea clones in Uganda

Many tea varieties are grown by tea farmers in Uganda. However, about 6 clones are deemed high yielding, thus more popular. They include 6/10, 31/8, 100/5, 108/82, 11/4, and 161/411, among others.

Characteristics of a good tea clone

i) Canopy formation –branching sidewise not upright
ii) High shoot density;
I ii) Development of average size leaves;
iv) Faster fermentation
v) Good response to fertilizer application;



High shoot density



Low shoot density

Conditions suitable for tea growing

1. Moisture levels
2. Soil pH range 4.5 - 5.0
3. Mulching and shading is a necessity before one year old
4. Fertilizer application is encouraged with higher content of N to boost vegetative growth
5. Acidic enhancing fertilizers should not be applied regularly

Pests & diseases in tea

Pest damage can lead to a significant impact on tea productivity. Pest infestation also adversely affects the quality of processed tea, eg damage caused by sucking pests like thrips and mites leading to dull appearance of tea. Severe infestation of thrips, mites & bugs affects the



Mosquito bug

Control: Ensure weed management to avoid alternate hosts.



Red spider mites

Control: Plant tolerant clones, mulching and fertilizer applica-

Diseases

Tea like other agricultural crops is prone to attack by diseases. The most serious one are root diseases eg Root rot/ collar crack (*Armillaria heimii* Pegler, *Armillaria mellea)* and *Xylaria.* These cause wilting & death of tea bushes



Xylaria

Control: Uproot & destroy affected plants. Dig a trench around affected site to stop further root infestation. Avoid *Xylaria* susceptible clones such as 6/58 and 161/411