

Establishing a modified mat nursery for rice

Modified mat nursery involves the establishment of seedlings in a layer of soil mix arranged on a firm surface.

This method of rice growing has several advantages over open field method such as less land required, fewer seeds, less fertilizer and water, easy separation of seedling and faster growth. However the spacing when transplanting should be 20cm apart and the frame should also be 50cm long, 30cm wide and 4cm deep. Banana stalks can be used as frames.

Preparation steps

Always use good quality seeds because they result in lower seed rate, more uniform germination, less replanting, fewer weeds, healthy seedlings and increased yields.

Also pre germinate seeds for 24 hours, drain off water and cover for another 24 hours to keep them moist

Additionally, mix soil, aged manure and rice hull in ratio 7:2:1 to enrich soil nutrient requirements.

Prepare the nursery by selecting a levelled area and spread banana leaves or plastic sheet to prevent roots from soil penetration.

Thereafter lay the soil mixture with a frame on top of banana leaves or plastic sheet, uniformly sow the pre germinated seeds, sprinkle soil and pack gently.

Immediately sprinkle water onto sowed seeds and then remove the frame. Repeat the process until the field is completed.

Ensure watering the covered nursery daily for 5 days, protect nursery from heavy rains. 5 days after seeding remove the

cover, flood nursery and maintain 1cm water level around mat

Lastly drain water 2 days before transplanting and sprinkle urea for nitrogen deficient seedlings.