»Preparing Banana and Plantain Suckers for Planting to Reduce Pests and Increase Yield«

»Preparing Banana and Plantain Suckers for Planting to Reduce Pests and Increase Yield«

Nematodes which are too small to see and weevils can be a serious problem for banana and plantain crops. Suckers are often infested with nematodes and banana weevils.
By immersing your suckers for 30 seconds in boiling water, you will kill the pests and have clean planting material. First, select suckers from healthy plants at least 20cm around and 61/2 cm across. Remove roots and any damaged or rotten areas by cutting and peeling the corm until they are clean white. Materials needed to treat suckers with boiling water are: firewood, a frame for the fire, boiling container, water, 2 pieces of rope about 60cm long each and one solid stick 3m long.

Preparation of materials

First build the fire frame and place your container. Fill the container 2/3 to 3/4 full with water. Tie each end of one piece of rope to each handle of the basket to create a loop with the rope and place the stick through each loop of the rope. Two people lower the basket with suckers into the water.
Few suckers can be treated using a sack instead of a basket and it is important to immerse the suckers in boiling water for the right length of time.

Stem treatment

Once the water has begun boiling, place the sucker in the basket, corm at at the bottom of the basket and the stem up and lower it into the boiling water with one person holding

each of the stick. One more person is needed to be marking the time as soon as the basket is lowered.
30 stones can be used in marking time by the third person. The person begins to move each of the 30 stones one by one from the pile into a container at a consistent pace until the last stone.

Pest control

Weevils can be controlled by placing freshly cut banana or plantain stems in your field. First cut stems into pieces that are about 20cm long, then split them into half lengthwise. Place the cut side of the stem facing down onto the soil. It is best to place cut stems in your field at around 6pm.
Place cut stems about 40cm away from the banana plant throughout the field and they will attract weevils away from your plants. Check the stem traps daily for the first 4 days in the morning.