

SANDALWOOD FARMING / SANDALWOOD CULTIVATION

The most expensive wood in the world could be sandalwood tree. Sandalwood is widely cultivated in India and Australia.

About 7–8 months old saplings that have grown up to a height of one feet are planted for cultivation of sandalwood. The ideal pH value of soil is between 6.5 and 7.5. For planting of saplings, dig holes that have 1.5 feet length, width and depth leaving a distance of 3 metres between them. Fill the holes with cow dung powder and soil before planting the saplings. Sandalwood trees require only moderate irrigation. Too much watering will perish the plant.

Other requirements

Sandalwood roots need presence of other plants at a distance of 1.5 to 2 metres in order to easily absorb nutrients from the soil. The roots absorb nutrients partially from the roots of other plants.

Choose papaya, sapota, pigeon peas or quick stick as rotation crops in sandalwood plantations for nutrient absorption. In natural habitat, weeds like mimosa will help growth of sandalwood trees. But only limited number of weeds should be allowed in the initial phase of farming.

Growth period

After a mediocre growth till 7–8 years, the tree will start growing one kg per year. The bark will be formed by the time the tree turns 15 years old. When it is fully grown, the tree will have a length of 13–16 metres and a diameter of 1–2 metres. No chemical pesticides or fertilisers are used.

Finally, Sandalwood trees are normally uprooted rather than

being chopped off, because even its roots fetch a high price according to its weight.