AIR LAYERING, AS A PROPAGATING METHOD

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Abstract

Air layering is the method of propagating new trees and shrubs from stems still attached to the parent plant. The stem is wrapped with a moist substrate to encourage roots to form. This method have been developed by farmers in China centuries ago, this method has been used successfully as a means of propagating several plants that are difficult to root. This procedure involved wounding a plant stem or branch and covering the wounded stem with a moist rooting medium until roots grow from the wounded area.

The main practical problems with this method were the method of wounding the stem, how tightly the rooting medium was wrapped around the branch, how to notify whether it was successful or not, and how to remove the wrap from the new plant. Before introducing this method, propagation was done by keeping moist compost and wrapping the wound separately with polythene or coconut husk, palm leaves, Kolapath. It was not successful because compost can spread soil-borne diseases and pathogens, there is a risk of spilling the rooting medium, and because the wrapping process requires a skilled person.

Now, it has become easy because a practically efficient propagating method was introduced to the farmers. It requires only polythene or plastic wraps and moist coconut coir as rooting media. Any farmer can do this technique. It ensures the stability of the rooting medium and resists damage from external factors. Here handling is easier than previous methods. Therefore, this method become more popular among horticulture-related farmers.

Key word: Air layering, horticulture, propagating method, soil-born diseases

