CHILI CULTIVATION METHODS USING MULCH

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Chili is one of the most important cash crops grown in Sri Lanka. It has become an essential ingredient in Sri Lankan meals. Chili cultivation is very popular among all kind of farmers. Chili can be grown in mainly dry zone and intermediate zones. This cultivation not require higher number of inputs but well management is required.

Chilli is a member of solanaceous crop family which is are mainly produced under protection or special standard. Main threats or problems for the chili cultivation is such crops are liable to rapidly spreading pest attacks and diseases. Most of the diseases are soil born including Foot and root rots, Phytophthora capsica, Pyrenochaeta lycopersici, Fusarium wilts. Therefore, as a common practice, such crops do not cultivate in same field in two consecutive seasons.

Mulching is the basic cultural method that used in world as it allows weed suppression, reduce the loss of soil moisture from the soil surface, and promote soil temperature there by it will reduce the growth of pathogens in soil. This method is used after some modifications and integrated with drip irrigation method by farmers as a strategy to diseases free chili crops cultivation in consecutive seasons. This method used black polythene mulching films which is developed under appropriate radiometric requirements. Before planting the seedlings of the second season, only has to remove the soil where the roots of the old plants have grown. This method reduced labor cost requirements and produce high quality products.

Key words : Chili, Mulching, Drip irrigation, solanaceous