

## SUSFORM-NOW (LDC) News No. 23.4: Litchi

**1. Description:** Litchi grows well in good light condition. It grows fast with medium height, some trees up to 15 – 20 m. Fruits are spherical, fruit skin turn reddish pink when ripening. Fruit flesh are opalescent, watering, sweet and flavorsome. Seeds are small with black colour.



People are using Litchi seedlings from layers or grafts to grow. Fruits can be harvested 2-3 years after planting

### **2. Planting area and planting season:**

- Litchi is a typical fruit tree in northern Vietnam. It grows well in low-land such as Hai Duong, Hung Yen provinces or mid-land areas in Bac Giang, Lang Son, Hoa Binh, Ha Giang. It grows well in a wide range of soils including loamy, sandy or alluvial soil. Litchi can be planted around home gardens, around the edge of a pond, in field with good drainage, on hills or slightly slopping land areas. To follow the traditional cultivation in many areas, plantation of Litchi around the edge of a fish pond can contribute to improvement of water quality of the pond.

- Planting at interval of 5x5m in flat land or 8x8m in sloping land.

- Planting season: best in spring or autumn.

### **3. Planting and tending:**

#### **3.1 Planting and tending young plants:**



- Prepare planting holes with the size of 50x50x50cm or 60x60x60cm 1-2 months before planting; apply 5-10 kg composted manure in each hole, fill up holes with soil and mix well before planting

- After planting trees in holes, trim the leaves to prevent wilting and make protecting fence to prevent animals from destroying the trees.

- Water trees right after planting and keep watering regularly to provide enough moisture for trees to develop.



### **3.2 Tending developed trees:**

- Pruning and shaping: Often conducted in Sep-Oct every year. First pruning: only leave 4-5 main branches heading towards different directions. Second pruning: shaping by cutting off all branches growing beyond the main branches to reduce the tree height and canopy area. Inside the canopy, prune all the low, shaded branches and branches infected with insect pests and diseases. Third pruning (after harvesting fruits): prune old, thin branches and branches infected with insect pests and diseases

*\*Regularly check to cut off all the shoots growing from the rootstocks*

- Fertiliser application: Early February, before flower-buds appear, apply 0.2 – 0.5 kg urea, 0.2 – 0.5kg potassium, 0.5 – 1 kg phosphate. Additionally, spray liquid fertiliser such as Komic or Antonich, Bioted (602,603) 2-3 times at 5 -7 days between times starting 10 days before or after flowering

-- Annually, after harvesting fruits, apply fertilisers as follows: preparing furrow sized 30x30cm around a tree at 1m apart from the tree and then add composted manure into the furrow before covering with soil.

- Water regularly prior flowering until harvesting fruit to maintain the moisture around 60 – 70%.

We can use the liquefied fertiliser from biogas systems to water the plants.

### **4. Pest and disease control:**

-The most common insect pests on litchi are stink bug, aphid (damaging young flowers and fruits) and spider feather. Control the insects by double-knock spraying Actara, Trebon, or Sherpa mixed with mineral oil Cantex at a 7-10 day interval between applications or shake the trees to make stink bug fall off before catching and killing them by hand. To control litchi mite, spray Ortur, Regent, Pegasus, or Danitol when spring buds appear.

2 most common diseases on litchi:

+ Downy mildew causing flower and fruit rot. Control the disease by spraying Rhidomil; Zineb; or Boocdo 2 times at 7-10 days before and after flowering.

+ Spicy blight disease causing leaf distortion and fruit drop. Control the disease by spray Mexyl-MZ, Dosay, Carbenzimidazole or Thio-M.

Note: Prepare the spraying solution with the right concentration and strictly follow the instruction on pesticide labels. Importantly, remove and burn all infected twigs, leaves and fruits to kill the insect and disease inoculums.



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