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Responses of 4 Salak Genotypes (*Salacca Zalacca* Gaert Voss) to Different Growing Media

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Abstract

Salak belongs to a group of palms which do not form trunks, but rather sprout their leaves from ground level. The plant is 1.5 - 5 m high, erect, heavy headed and extremely spiny. Salak palms grow as under-storey plants in the low lands of the tropical rain forest in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. In Indonesia, salak has been cultivated throughout the islands and the fruit is widely used as fresh fruit. One important salak cultivar in that area is “pondoh” due to its superior quality. The salak fruit is small in size (about 5 cm in diameter), enclosed a whitish translucent edible portion which resembles the taste of banana and pineapple. The peculiar fruit peel, which is similar to a reptile skin is the reason for the name “snake fruit”.

To maintain the genetic resources and to promote the production, knowledge about eco-physiological aspects are important. The purpose of this study was to investigate the responses of different salak cultivar seedlings to a variety of plant growing media (sand, peat moss and compost: sand (1:1)). 4 months-old seedlings of 4 different salak cultivars from Indonesia, i.e. “Pondoh Super”, “Pondoh Hitam”, “Pondoh Manggala” and “Gading Jawa” have been used as test plants. The experiment has been conducted from December 2002 until March 2003 in the greenhouse of Department of Fruit Science in Berlin. The responses of growth (increment of leaf area, shoot length, dry weight of root and dry weight of shoot), leaf gas exchange, leaf colour and plant mineral contents (nitrogen, phosphor, calcium, magnesium and potassium) to different plant growing media will be presented and discussed.