



Issued in: November 2009

Serial No. 06/09

TEA NURSERY MANAGEMENT**1. Introduction**

Nursery management is an most important operation for successful tea cultivation in the field. The success of tea plantation depends largely on the vigour and the quality of nursery plants used. The primary objective of nursery management is to raise healthy, vigorous and uniform plants from suitable cultivars with minimum casualties over an appropriate period of time at a minimum cost. A plant raised in the nursery of about 30 cm height comprising approximately 15 leaves with 2 - 3 side shoots, and a well developed root system is considered as suitable for planting. Good Nursery Practices (GNP) including advance planning, correct and timely implementation of nursery operations are essential to produce healthy and uniform plants in a nursery as described below.

2. Schedule of operations

Nursery activities for different tea growing regions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Nursery activity schedule for different planting regions/ monsoon sectors

Activity	Up country/ South-west	Uva/ North-west	Low country/ South-west
Pruning mother bushes (4 - 6 months prior to planting)	Nov - Dec	May - Jul	Apr - May
Soil collection, preparation, fumigation and bagging	Feb - Mar	Jul - Aug	Jul - Aug
Planting of cuttings	May - Jun	Nov - Dec	Aug - Sep
Supplying casualties (2 weekly intervals)	Jun - Aug	Dec - Jan	Sep - Oct
Fertilizer application (2 weekly intervals)	Aug - Sep	Jan - Feb	Oct - Nov
Disbudding (4 - 5 leaf stage)	Aug - Sep	Feb - Mar	Nov - Dec
Thumb nailing (7 - 8 leaf stage)	Sep - Oct	Mar - Apr	Dec - Jan
Restacking (4 - 5 month stage)	Oct - Nov	Apr - May	Dec - Jan
Hardening (5 - 7 month stage)	Dec - Jan	May - Jun	Mar - Apr
Field planting Up country & Uva: in 10 - 12 months Low country: in 8 - 9 months	May - Jun	Oct - Nov	Apr - Jun

3. Selection of site

A nursery site must be centrally located to facilitate easy and constant supervision. The size of the site depends on the annual requirement of plants and the lie and slope of the land. Factors to be considered in the selection of a site are;

- Proximity to a source of water
- Good drainage
- Protection from wind
- Proximity to the source of soil
- Proximity to the source of planting material
- Absence of over hanging branches of trees

4. Preparation of beds

The ideal size of a bed should be about 1.0 m wide (3.5 ft) and could be of any convenient length of about 20 m (65 ft), with a pathway of 60 cm (2 ft) on either side for carrying out nursery operations. Beds are built in a north-south direction to receive sunlight throughout the day. The beds should be raised to