Sapota (Chiku) Farming | How To Grow Sapodilla from Seed | Sapota Cultivation in India

Sapota is mainly cultivated for its fruits value and for the production of chiku. Chiku is a gum like substance obtained from latex and is mainly used for the preparation of chewing gum.

Sapota is propagated by vegetative method such as air layering, grafting and budding. It can be intercropped with bananas, papaya, pineapples, cocoa, French beans, peas, tomatoes and cabbages.

Land preparation

Sapota does well in deep alluvium, sandy loam and well drained medium black soils with a pH of 6-8. Sapota does well in warm and humid climate such as the coastal climate.

To prepare land, plough the land 2-3 times at a depth of 20 to 45 cm and a distance of 10 by 10 m then level and divide into terraces. Plant wind breakers at a distance of 1.5-1.8 m in a row.

Dig pits of 90 cm and expose it for a period of 2-3 weeks. Separate the top soil and sub soil. Fill each pit with top soil then subsoil mixed with decomposed farmyard manure and lindane powder to control termites.

Sapota planting

Plant the grafts in the hole, ensuring the grafts are above the soil. Remove the polythene straps used for securing the grafts a month after planting to reduce mortality of the graft.

Remove new sprouts emerging from the root stalks below the graft joint and irrigate at an interval of 30 days. Weeds should be regularly removed from the basin. Prune to give the tree shape and to help the flowers and fruits grow and receive maximum sunlight.

Harvesting

Sapota bears fruits from the 3 rd year of planting and are either hand picked or harvested with special harvesters. The fruits are highly perishable and can be stored under ordinary temperatures for a period of 7-8 days. In local markets, the graded fruits are packed and transported in bamboo baskets to help reduce the bruising and promote ripening of fruits.

Leaf weber, hairy caterpillars bird worm, leaf spot, base heart and anthracnose are the common pests and diseases.