

भा. कृ. अनु. प.– केंद्रीय कृषिवानिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान
पहुज डेम के पास, ग्वालियर रोड, झाँसी (उ.प्र.) – 284003

हर मेड़ पर पेड़

Azadirachta indica A. Juss

Family: Meliaceae

Common name: Neem, Indian Lilac

Azadirachta indica is a small- to medium-sized tree, usually evergreen, up to 15 m tall and 90 cm in diameter, with a round, large crown, sometimes fluted at base. The Neem tree is noted for its drought resistance. Normally it thrives in areas with sub-arid to sub-humid conditions with an annual rainfall between 400 mm and 1200 mm. It can grow in regions with an annual rainfall below 400 mm, but in such cases it depends largely on ground water levels. Being a tropical/sub-tropical plant, it is found in areas with annual mean maximum temperature of 32.5 to 42.5°C and minimum of 4 to 21°C. Temperatures below 4°C and frost are unfavourable. Neem is susceptible to waterlogging. It is a tree of semi-arid tropics. It grows well on a wide variety of deep or shallow soils ranging from sandy soils in Rajasthan to clayey soils in Maharashtra, but does not survive on waterlogged, highly saline or deep dry sand. Its best growth is reported from black cotton soils. Also, it thrives better than other species on dry, stony, clayey and shallow soils. It can also come up on soil, where there is hard calcareous or clay pan just below the soil surface. Its root system has an unusual ability to collect nutrients and moisture even from highly leached sandy soils. The soil pH needed for the optimum growth is 6.2 and above. It is grown both in the plains and in the hills, ascending up to 1830 m in Kumaon.

The field where Neem seedlings are to be transplanted, should be properly ploughed. The seedlings are ready for transplantation when they are four to six months old (15 to 22.5 cm height). Seedlings should not be kept waiting to be transplanted for a long time because their tap root becomes very long and can get damaged when they are taken out.

Pits of dimension 30 cm × 30cm × 30 cm should be dug at a distance of 5m × 5 m (400 plants per hectare.). Only healthy seedlings should be chosen. Transplanting during the monsoon season increases their survival rate. Otherwise, they should be watered once every 2 or 3 days. After they have established well, they may be watered once in 7 to 10 days.

Neem can be easily raised through direct sowing, entire/polypot seedlings or root-shoot cuttings. For degraded areas direct sowing is more successful than other methods.. Seeds of Neem trees can be directly sown in the fields by line sowing or broadcasting, sowing on mounds or ridges, sowing in trenches in sunken beds in circular saucers. But planting with well grown nursery seedlings of one year's provides better survival and growth. Stump planting also preferred in Neem.

The rate of growth of Neem in plantations varies with the quality of soil. It is fairly rapid up to the age of 5 years after which it slows down. The plant attains a height of 4 m at 5 years and 10 m at 25 years. The mean annual girth increment is 2.3-3.0 cm. More rapid growth is attained under favourable conditions.

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निदेशक
केन्द्रीय कृषिवानिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान, झाँसी