

## Plantains and bananas in Philippine agriculture.

Dr R.V. VALMAYOR\*

### BANANES ET PLANTAINS DANS L'AGRICULTURE DES PHILIPPINES

R.V. VALMAYOR

*Fruits*, nov. 1976, vol. 31, n°11, p. 661-663.

RESUME - Le plantain et la banane sont les fruits les plus importants des Philippines. Les bananes à dessert sont exportées en grandes quantités au Japon. Les bananes à cuire généralement consommées sur place incluent les groupes 'Saba' (BBB) et 'Bluggoe' (ABB). Les cultivars 'Saba' sont robustes, immunes au sigatoka, à la maladie de Panama et à la maladie de Moko. Les bananes à cuire sont utilisées sous forme de 'chips' et le ketchup de bananes devient de plus en plus populaire aux Philippines.

Plantains and bananas together constitute the most important fruit of the Philippines. They are grown in the fields and backyards of practically every farmer of the country and fruits are available all year round. During the last six (6) years, the Philippines developed a highly successful banana export trade. Starting modestly in 1969 with a shipment of 21,000 metric tons (MT) sharing close to 3% of the Japanese banana market, the Philippines rose to become the premier supplier of bananas to Japan in 1973 when our exports reached 434,000 MT or 47% of the Japanese import trade. Favoured by proximity to Japan and an ideal climate for banana production, the Philippines increased its exports in 1974 to 620,000 MT or 73% of the volume imported by Japan that year. Estimates for 1975 indicate an export of 735,000 MT which makes up 79% of the Japanese market. The target of the Philippine banana industry is to supply at least 80% of the demand in Japan for the next five (5) years. Although that country will remain the Philippines, most important market for fresh bananas, trade with Iran, Saudi Arabia and other countries are being developed. Figure 1 illustrates the dramatic increase of the Philippines, share in the lucrative Japanese banana trade, the second biggest banana market in the world.

\* Deputy Director General Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research.

Communication présentée à la Première réunion internationale de travail sur les bananes plantains et autres bananes de cuisson (Ibadan, A.G.C.D./I.I.T.A., 27-29 janvier 1976).

While the export trade is made up purely of dessert bananas, the local market has a strong demand for cooking bananas. Farmers in some regions of the country rely partly on cooking bananas for their diet to supplement deficiencies cultivars of cooking bananas in the Philippines. Some belong to the plantain group (AAB) while the more important ones fall under the 'Bluggoe' (ABB) and 'Saba' (BBB) groups of cultivars. Two (2) types of plantains are grown, one type has a persistent make bud (French Plantain) and the other has none (Horn Plantain). Three (3) cultivars of French Plantain are recognized but only one (1) cultivar of Horn Plantain is grown all over the country. Their common names are as follows :

- A. French Plantain
  - 1. 'Bungaoisan'
  - 2. 'Laknao'
  - 3. 'Muracho'
- B. Horn Plantain
  - 1. 'Tindok'

Although plantains are favorite cooking bananas in the Philippines, they are grown in limited scale because of their extreme susceptibility to the banana borer (*Cosmopolites sordidus*). It is not uncommon to harvest only once from a hill of 'Tindok'. Healthy suckers are transplanted to new sites to maintain the cultivar and continue harvesting. It is

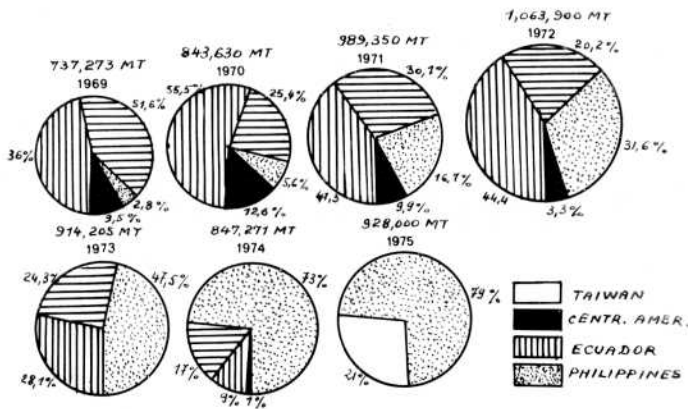
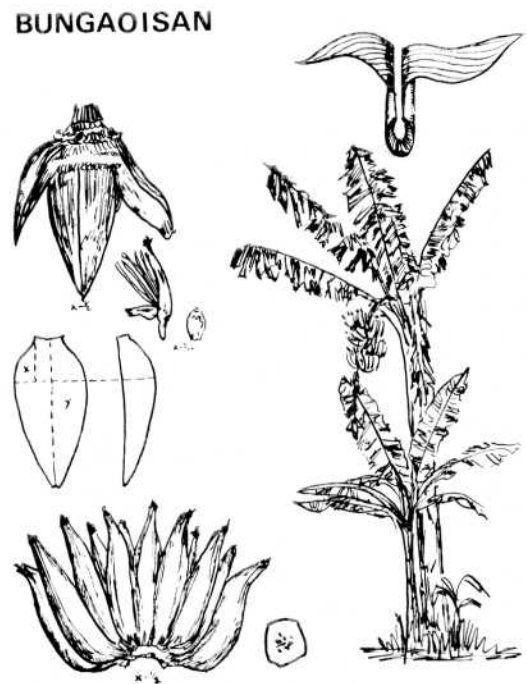
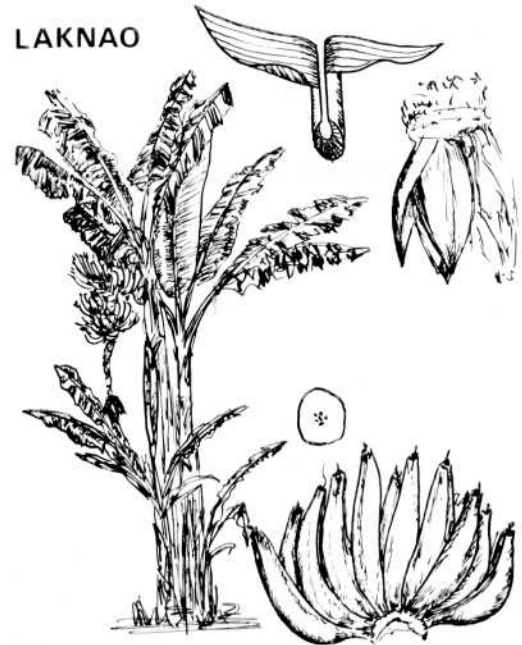


Fig. 1 • BANANA IMPORTATION OF JAPAN BY SUPPLIER COUNTRY

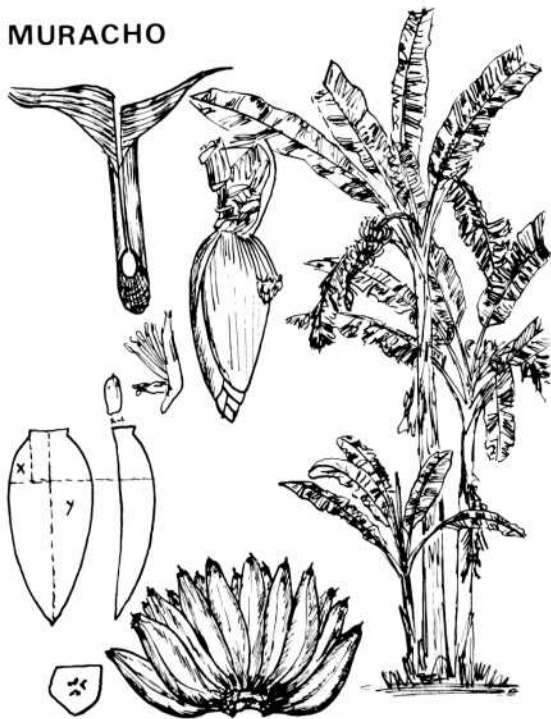


a slow and uneconomical practice. Chemical control of the corm borer with the use of insecticides such as Furadan is not practised by small farmers

The most important cooking banana in the Philippines is the 'Saba'. It is a robust, productive, drought tolerant and disease resistant cultivar. It is immune to Sigatoka Disease and highly resistant to Panama Wilt and Moko (Bacterial Wilt). Many clones with very close affinity to 'Saba' are considered members of the Saba group. Some of the more common ones are 'Cardaba', 'Dippig', 'Mundo', 'Turangkog', 'Binendito' and 'Pitogo'. They differ from cultivars belong-

ing to the 'Bluggoe' group in having small and shorter fruits with stubby apices. Their male buds are broadly ovate with bracts that do not taper sharply. The 'Bluggoe' group of cultivars such as the 'Matavia' and 'Madurangga' have larger and longer fruits with prominent tips. Their male buds are

**MURACHO**



**SABA**



narrowly ovate and the individual bracts taper more sharply from the shoulder. Their fruits are fibrous and generally inferior compared to the quality of the 'Saba' group cultivars which possess fine textured fruits. Cooking bananas

are commonly boiled or fried, with or without sugar. They are also made into candies such as banana chips and sauce such as banana catsup. Banana catsup is becoming more popular than tomato catsup in the Philippines.