The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea, a part of the Atlantic Ocean, in the south.

Although the coconut palm is not indigenous to Nigeria, 15,000 ha of land are estimated to be under coconut cultivation in the country, mostly in the coastal areas of Lagos State and the delta areas of Rivers State (Akpan 1994). Another estimated 1.2 million hectares have been identified as suitable for coconut cultivation. The Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR) is mandated to carry out national research on coconut. NIFOR has identified the spread of Awka wilt lethal yellowing-like disease as the major threat in the development of the coconut industry in Nigeria. The incidence of the disease is estimated at 8-10% in the inland areas and about 5% in the coastal areas of Lagos State. To this end research has been carried out on the following:

- The control of Awka wilt disease through the development of high-yielding, disease-resistant hybrid varieties.
- Studies on the aetiology of the Awka wilt disease and the development of efficient screening techniques.
- Studies of the fertility management on the coastal and inland soils.
- Development of sustainable coconut-based intercropping systems.
- Development of efficient postharvest technologies.

Despite limited research funding, the NIFOR’s coconut research programme has recorded major achievements (Okwuagwu 2005). However, future progress will depend to a great extent on the Institute’s present effort to combat the spread of the Awka wilt lethal yellowing-like disease.

References


Nigerian Tall (NIT)
Ratnambal MJ, Niral V, Krishnan M

Conservation
Nigerian Tall (NIT) is conserved at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) in Kasaragod (Kerala) and at the centres under the All India Coordinated Research Project on Palms (AICRPP).

History
Nigerian Tall, a local Tall cultivar of Nigeria, was introduced to the germplasm collection at CPCRI, Kasaragod in 1963.

Identification
Nigerian Tall is a medium-statured palm attaining a height of 5.4-7.1 m at 22 years of age. It has a medium-sized bole and the stem has a girth of 82 cm. The crown is circular in shape and carries about 30-32 leaves. The leaves are long with thick and strong petioles. The leaves contain a large number of long leaflets. This variety starts flowering in about 79 months (70-89 months) after planting. The inflorescences are long with a large number (40) of long spikelets. The peduncle is short, but not very broad. The number of female flowers/inflorescence varies from 13-35, with an average of 0.6 female flowers per spikelet. The fruit setting percentage is also low, around 26%. The palm is generally cross-pollinated. The male and female phases in a spadix do not overlap. The male phase extends for 18 days, while the female phase lasts for 4 days and begins 2 days after the end of the male phase. However, inter-spadix overlapping of male and female phases occurs. The fruits of this cultivar are large and oval in shape. The colour of the fruit varies from brown to greenish yellow. The nut inside is also large with a thick layer of solid endosperm and a very strong shell.

Yield and production
The palms of the Nigerian Tall cultivar start yielding 101-119 months after planting. The palms are regular bearers, producing about 9-10 bunches annually. The nut yield varies from 62-76 fruits per palm per year. The fruit is large-sized which is about 26-33% husk. The husked nut on average weighs 791g, with a copra content of 185g per nut. The oil content of the copra is 67.8%. Therefore, the estimated annual copra and oil yield, under rain-fed conditions, is 2.5 t per ha and 1.7 t per ha, respectively. However, studies on NIT populations at the Nigerian Institute of Oil Palm Research, have recorded low copra yield of 0.34-1.7 t per ha.

Other information
Nigerian Tall is highly susceptible to nut damage caused by the Eriophyid mite Aceria guerreronis. The quality of the tender nut water is not very good, and therefore this cultivar is not suitable for commercial cultivation for tender nut purpose. NIT has been evaluated for yield and performance in germplasm trials. However, in India this cultivar has not been utilized in any systematic breeding/crop improvement programmes.

References
Nigerian Tall (NIT)