

The background of the entire image is a vibrant green, featuring numerous coconuts in various stages of ripeness. Some are bright green and smooth, while others are a slightly darker shade. The coconuts are scattered across the frame, with some showing their characteristic three-lobed shape and others appearing more rounded. A prominent coconut stem with small, dark, scaly nodes runs vertically through the lower-left portion of the image. In the bottom-left corner, a large, out-of-focus green coconut is partially visible, adding depth to the composition.

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cocoNUT





INTRODUCTION TO COCONUT

Origin, Growth, and Distribution

The coconut palm tree (*Cocos Nucifera*), from the Palmae or Arecaceae family, is a tropical marvel known for its versatility and numerous applications. Often called 'the tree of fortune', coconuts are used in various culinary and non-culinary ways.

Native to South Asia, coconuts have spread globally, aided by their buoyant, seawater-tolerant fruits. In Sri Lanka, coconuts thrive in the Puttalam, Kurunegala and Gampaha districts, known as the Coconut Triangle.

Coconut palms require warm climates, sandy soil, abundant sunlight, regular rainfall, high humidity and no overhead canopy to grow. Their rich nutrient profile and extensive uses make them a crucial part of tropical agriculture and trade.



INTRODUCTION TO **COCONUT**

Coconut trees are classified into dwarf and tall types, with tall varieties bearing fruit in 6 to 10 years and dwarf types in 4 to 5 years. Mature trees produce over 30 fruits annually and can live up to 80 years. Tall trees grow up to 25-30 meters high with smooth, unbranched trunks, while dwarf trees are shorter. The tree develops from a swollen base and features a rosette of leaves and a branched spadix at the top.



FLOWERS

The coconut palm produces a flower cluster called a spadix, which grows about one meter long and is initially covered by a sheath. After about three months, the sheath opens to reveal the spadix, which has 20-65 branches with flowers. Female flowers are found at the base of the branches, while male flowers are located along the rest.



PROPAGATION

Propagation of coconut palms is achieved through unhusked ripe nuts.

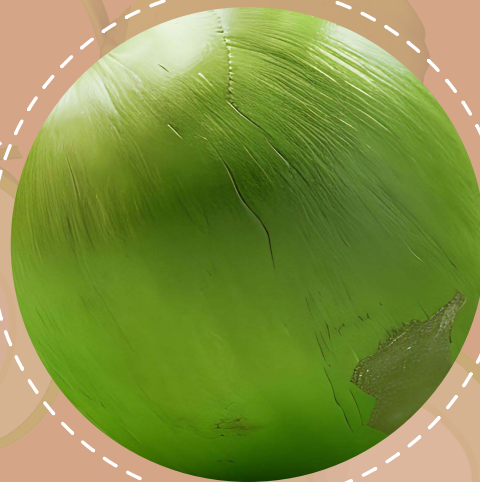
LEAVES

Coconut trees have a rosette of leaves at the top of the trunk, which can reach lengths of up to 7 meters and cover an area of about 10 m². The leaves are thick and vary in thickness between surfaces. Each leaf develops from a central spear, takes about 6 months to mature and lasts up to 3 years. Tall palms produce 14-16 leaves annually, while dwarf palms produce around 21.



EXTERIOR APPEARANCE

Coconuts are large, dry fruits typically 30-45 cm long and 15-20 cm in diameter. They come in two forms: one with a fibrous husk and an oblong shape and another that is spherical and rich in sweet coconut water when unripe. The outer skin can be green, yellow or brown, depending on the maturity of the fruit.



INTERIOR STRUCTURE & **FRUIT COMPOSITION**

The mesocarp is fibrous and dry, providing coir. The hard endocarp surrounds the seed, which has a thin brown seed coat. The seed contains both solid endosperm (copra) and liquid endosperm.



MATURITY SIGNS AND HARVESTING OF COCONUT

Green coconuts, known for their coconut water and soft, jelly-like flesh, are harvested 6 to 8 months after flowering. Mature coconuts, with firmer flesh, take 11 months or more to develop and are typically sold with their husks removed. Coconut trees bloom throughout the year, allowing for continuous production.



USES OF COCONUT

Coconut is highly versatile. Its flesh or kernel can be eaten fresh or dried and is used to make coconut milk, cream and flour. Coconut water is enjoyed as a refreshing beverage, while coconut oil serves both culinary and skincare purposes. Coir, derived from the husk, is used in making ropes, mats and brushes. The shell can be processed into charcoal and activated carbon. Additionally, toddy, a drink made from the sap of young flower stalks, and palm cabbage from the tree's bud are also valuable products. The mature leaves are used for thatching, and the tree trunk is utilized in construction and as decorative wood.



HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCONUT

Coconut offers numerous health benefits. It supports heart health by providing healthy fats and may aid in weight management and digestion. The fruit can boost energy levels, encourage fat burning and has potential antimicrobial properties. Additionally, coconut is beneficial for skin and hair health due to its moisturizing and protective qualities. It also promotes oral health and provides antioxidants, contributing to overall well-being.



NUTRIENT COMPOSITION OF COCONUT

Coconuts are a nutrient-rich powerhouse! Its water is a great source of potassium, vital for heart health and hydration. Coconut milk provides healthy fats that support energy and overall cell function. The dried coconut flesh or copra, is high in beneficial fats and protein, aiding sustained energy and muscle health. Additionally, coconut contains essential minerals like calcium, magnesium and iron, which are important for bone health, energy production, and overall wellness. Whether enjoyed as water, milk, or dried flesh, coconut offers a variety of nutrients that contribute to a balanced diet.









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