

INFLUENCE OF THE NUMBER OF PRIMARY ROOTS AND MULCHING ON  
VEGETATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF RUBBER SEEDLINGS (*Hevea* spp)

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The unevenness in the growth of rubber seedlings in the stock nursery usually pre-determines a low production of plantable budded stumps. Except for the wellknown factor of incompatibility of scion vs stock, this variation can be related the number of secondary roots. This is attributed probably to the morphogenic effect in genetic inheritance of the stock, as revealed in the seed germination. There is a deficiency of concrete information in respect of the influence of the number of root hairs at initial germination, capacity for later deep-rooting and consequent vegetative development of the nursery planting material. These factors lead to the carrying out of this study. The results obtained concluded that: (a) the development and function of the lateral roots present on seedlings at 12 months old are independent of the number of primary roots, (b) the number of primary radicals do not provide a reliable criterion for the selection of seedlings for planting and, (c) the plant mulch constitutes a positive factor for the growth of the plant in attaining the highest number of good final budded stand and, (d) in practical terms, the use of mulch in rubber stock nursery requires a study on economic viability.

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