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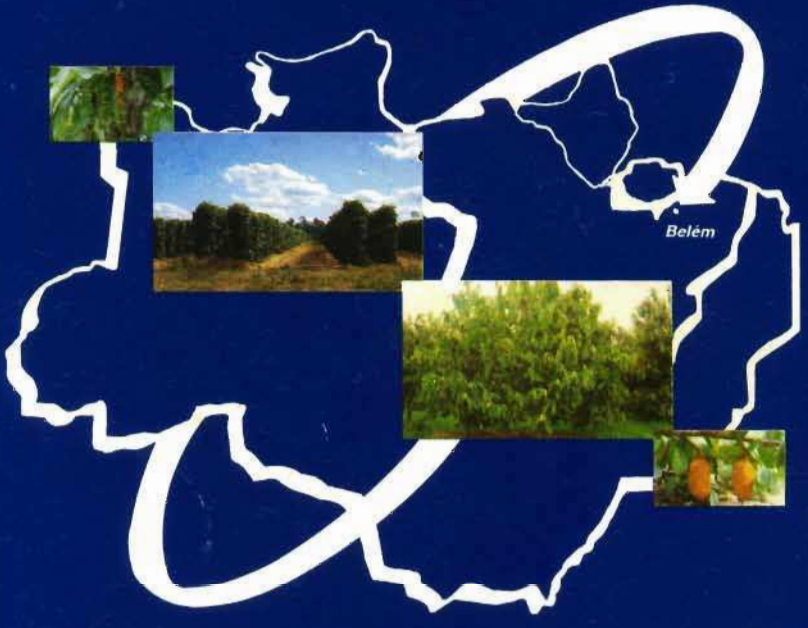

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EFFECT OF INTERCROPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON ANTHESIS IN CUPUAÇU (Theobroma grandiflorum - Sterculiaceae)[1]

Giorgio Cristino Venturieri[2] *e Márcia Motta Maués*[3]

*Cupuaçu (**Theobroma grandiflorum**), one of the most profitable new crops of Amazonia, is now attracting world-wide attention as an exotic fruit, used in juices, ice cream and sweets. Nevertheless, its yields are low and prices are consequently high. The low fecundity of cupuaçu is due to the low rate of natural effective pollination, that takes place in only 1.6% of the flowers. The scarcity of pollinators and the limited time during which the flower is attractive to the effective pollinator, the mosquito bee (**Plebeia minima**), are seen as the principal limiting factors to natural pollination. Observed variation in the timing of flower opening suggests the possibility of selection for earlier flower opening in order to give bees more time to pollinate. Contributions of individual genotypic variation, humidity, shading, and changes in light quality (provided by coloured cellophane filters on flowers) on flower opening are reported. Shading was not the only factor influencing anthesis. The timing of anthesis in less illuminated plants seemed to be more influenced by rainfall than in the more illuminated trees. Relative humidity of the air was higher with the intercropped plants and may be associated with earlier anthesis. Treatments using coloured cellophane filters did not demonstrate any influence on the time of flower opening.*

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