

Indigenous knowledge to control Elephants damaging crop lands

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The conflict between elephant and man is becoming a more and more common problem in Sri Lanka. According to several ancient literatures, the conflict between man and elephant was controlled by traditional and indigenous methods. Extensive literature surveys on research articles, ancient authentic texts, ancient books, farmer discussions and news articles were used to extract the most successful methods to deter elephants from crops lands. Several successful indigenous methods are presented to disseminate this valuable knowledge into the present generation. Methods identified were Beehive fences in the border of the farmland and when elephant enters the disturbed swarm of bees attacks the elephants. Buffers of cultivation of Chili, which is an irritant, causing elephants to cough, sneeze and eventually turn away from the crop field. Vegetable buffer zones with unpalatable crops such as sisal, chili, tea, ginger, mustard, or oilseed are some methods. These unpalatable crops may not necessarily deter the elephants, but these crops will not be raided and therefore the farmers' livelihood is ensured. When elephants crush the mustard plants, they feel the strong smell which the elephants do not like, and they turn back and go away. In addition, these crops will provide additional income to the farmers. Acoustic deterrents like disturbance shooting, tigers' roars on tape are few of them. Chemical deterrents such as chilli powders and chilli pasted robes are also used effectively. Physical barriers such as trenches, bamboo spikes, sharp stones are also used to deter elephants. In conclusion these indigenous methods could be practiced with less cost to deter elephants and also gain additional income.

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