

Do's and Don'ts for Hailstorms in Agriculture

Impact of hail is usually localized, but the damage to crops - particularly at critical stages and infrastructure may be significant. Even light hail tends to be followed by pest and disease attacks.

Do's:

- i) In areas with higher probability of hailstorm occurrence, shadenets can be a good option especially for high value crops.
- ii) Nylon nets used for protection against bird damage can also protect the crop from hail damage.
- iii) It is always advisable to have shelter belts and wind breaks around orchard to avoid heavy damage to the main crop. These will also lower the water requirements and other stresses.
- iv) Provide support to banana crops, young fruit plants and propping up in sugarcane crop/ staking of vegetables to prevent the crops from lodging.
- v) Keep harvested produces at a safe place.
- vi) Keep cattle/goats indoor during a hailstorm.
- vii) Plant tall trees. Tree shelterbelts can markedly reduce hail damage in their vicinity.
- viii) For orchard crops, it is advised to remove all the broken branches and twigs. Recommended chemicals should be sprayed to avoid secondary infection by fungus.
- ix) Remove the fallen fruit to reduce the spread of disease and pests during their decay. Large wounds on trunks and branches should be covered with a water-based paint to avoid desiccation and disease infection.
- x) Farmers need not be panicked if the damage is less severe. Wait till the next sprout to decide whether totally abandon orchards or replacement of trees will be sufficient.
- xi) Draining of excess stagnated water from banana fields to facilitate proper aeration.
- xii) Provide support to the bent/ damaged trees with bamboo sticks and earthing up. Provide light irrigation to soften the fields that are hardened / compacted due to hailstorm.

Don'ts:

- i. Do not keep the damaged flowers and fruits started rotting due to coldshocks and infection by bacterial and fungal pathogens like grey sooty mould. Hence, such fruits and flowers should promptly be collected and destroyed to avoid further spread of infection.
- ii. Avoid waterlogging in the field.
- iii. Don't keep the cattle/goats in open field.
- iv. Don't Keep harvested produces in open space.