

The capsules of the small seeded varieties commence to ripen in from 4 to 6 months from the time of sowing and those of the large seeded varieties from 7 to 10 months according to variety and the prevailing climate conditions. Owing to the irregular ripening of this crop, the harvesting is a somewhat tedious process, but as the work involved is not laborious, it could be done by women and children.

As the capsule dehisces and scatters the seed immediately they are ripe, it is necessary to look over the plants at least once a week, collecting those sufficiently ripened. The seeds after collecting require drying and may then be stored in bags in a dry place until sold or pressed for oil.

The average yield per acre (pure crop) is given as 4 to 6 cwt. of seeds average good crop.

From the foregoing it would seem that it is not altogether a suitable Catch Crop for rubber owing to its habit of exhausting the soil. When practical, however, this plant could be planted as a border to rubber, but this is largely a question of the quality of soil in individual Estates.

J. W. A.

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## MR. H. A. WICKHAM COMING OUT TO CEYLON WITH A CURING MACHINE.

The father of the plantation rubber industry, Mr. H. A. Wickham, is due in Colombo towards the end of the month, the chief purpose of his visit being to introduce a machine which embodies his ideas, acquired in the home of Hard Fine Para, as to the curing of rubber. Mr. Wickham has every hope that his machine will have a great effect upon the plantation rubber industry. During his stay in England, Mr. Wickham has been making arrangements with regard to the machine, but owing to the time it has taken to settle matters, has been delayed longer than he expected, otherwise he would have been in the Island now.

We understand that Mr. Wickham claims that his machine imitates the well-known smoking process employed by the natives on the Amazon, each layer of rubber being smoked and the article consequently thoroughly permeated by the disinfectant fumes. It is Mr. Wickham's contention that under the present processes some of the best qualities of the rubber are lost, carried away in the washing, and it will be interesting to watch how far he will be able to substantiate his claim by the production of samples of superior resiliency and tensile strength than the present first quality rubber turned out on estates. It is also claimed that the machine will turn out a perfectly uniform quality, whereas at present the rubber from the same estate varies considerably. (*Times of Ceylon 6th June, 1912*).