

Starting Right with Healthy Plants

You can start new plantings of banana by using tissue-cultured or micropropagated plants. Tissue-cultured plants are uniform in size and are insect and disease free. When transplanted however, they are susceptible to pests and diseases. When you buy tissue-cultured plants, here are steps to grow them before they are ready to be planted in your yard.



Step 1. Tissue-cultured plants are delicate and need to be started in pots. Begin by carefully removing the young plants from the culture sack.



Step 2. Gently rinse the gelatin-like medium from the roots.



Step 3. If the plantlets are in clusters, gently separate them with a small knife. If available, dip plants in a fungicide solution.



Step 4. Place each plantlet in a small pot containing commercial potting mix. Transplant with care to prevent damage to roots.



Step 5. Once transplanted, plants must be watered immediately. The soil should be kept moist but not soaking. High humidity is important and can be achieved through an intermittent mist system or by covering plantlets with clear plastic bags. Transplants should be kept in partial shade and **gradually** adapted to sunlight.



Step 6. A dilute water soluble fertilizer solution may be applied 4-6 weeks after transplanting. Plants are usually kept in pots for **2-3 months** before transplanting into the field.



Prepared by Peter Toves and Mari Marutani-----No. 2001-1