



HONDURAN FUNDATION FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

BANANA FHIA-01

*A hardy banana for home gardens
and for processing*



Banana and Plantain Program

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INTRODUCTION

The semi-dwarf hybrid FHIA-01 is a “Prata Ana” type banana, which was developed in 1988. It may be eaten as a fresh fruit when ripe and boiled or fried when green. The ripe fruits have an apple flavor (sweet-acid) and a very good taste when boiled or fried green. It is being grown commercially in Australia and other countries. It was introduced into Australia as a substitute for the famous “Ladyfinger” banana.

CHARACTERISTICS

Morphology

The plant height is between 2.5 and 3.5 m; the strong plants support heavy bunches without a need for propping. It has decumbent leaves and a glossy stem. The bunch hangs slightly inclined and is asymmetric. The green fruits are rather straight to the flower end, which is shaped like a bottleneck.



FHIA-01 bunch.

Phenology

The time from planting to flowering is between 290 and 320 days. The first production cycle requires 90 to 100 days from flowering to harvest. The second flowering occurs between 530 and 560 days after planting.

Production

The net bunch weight without the stalk is between 25 and 35 kg, and the number of fruits per bunch varies from 130 to 160.

The weight of one banana is between 192 and 220 g.

Resistance features

The hybrid is resistant to the Black Sigatoka fungus and all three strains of the Panama disease fungus that affect the Musaceae family. It is resistant to fungal crown rots, moderately resistant to the nematode *Radopholus similis* and moderately susceptible to *Pratylenchus coffeae*.



FHIA-01 (right) with its parents Prata Ana (left) and SH-3142 (middle).

Being resistant to the most important diseases, this banana may be grown organically and at the same time it is an attractive alternative for subsistence farmers because it does not require fungicide applications.

AGRONOMICAL ASPECTS

Agro-ecological requirements

The plants are high yielding and vigorous, and adapted to sub-optimal growing conditions (low humidity and fertilizer levels and sub-optimal temperatures).

- Altitude:** FHIA-01 grows well at altitudes from 0 to 1400 meters above sea level in the tropics.
- Soils:** non-flooding, well-drained and easily accessible areas should be selected; the hybrid requires loamy soils.
- Rain:** should be well-distributed and about 2000 mm per year.

Temperature: the optimum mean temperature is 28 °C. The hybrid is cold tolerant and resists lower temperatures than the commercial Cavendish banana.

Crop Management

Plant densities of 1600 plants per hectare are recommended.

Fertilizer requirements should be based on the results of a soil analysis. Generally, under the prevailing conditions in Sula valley (Honduras), annual applications of 300 kg of nitrogen and 250 kg of potassium per hectare are recommended.

Deleafing should be carried out every 4 weeks, eliminating the doubled leaves and removing the infected tips of other leaves. Young shoots have to be removed every 8 weeks. The removal of “sister shoots” should be done 4 months after planting.

The individual hands of a bunch mature in a sequential manner, so the hands can be harvested one at a time.

Post-harvest

When environmental conditions are not extreme, the fruits will have a long green life and present good handling characteristics. When ripe, the peel will have an attractive yellow color, with the pulp showing a soft texture and a nice, slightly acid taste. When cooked green, the fruit will be attractively white on the outside and golden yellow on the inside, presenting an excellent texture and taste. The fruit does not fall apart when cooked. The ripe fruit may be used as banana puree for babies. It is also recommended for use in fruit salads because, unlike Cavendish bananas, slices of FHIA-01 do not oxidize and become black.