

very beginning and the cultivators took up the strain without hesitation. During the last three seasons (1933-34-35) it has been compared at various places with mid-late large grained varieties such as Dodki, Dangar-wel and Patni and has given an average of 2385 lb. per acre, as against 2262 lb. of the local varieties. Its highest yield was 2688 lb. and lowest 1990 lb. per acre.

A New Strain of Mid-Late Kolamba Rice.

IN the Bombay Presidency the coastal districts of Thana and Kolaba grow nearly 600,000 of acres annually, representing roughly 30 per cent. of the total acreage under rice in the Presidency. The most widely grown variety of rice is Kolamba. It is a late variety, fine grained, and produces a good table rice. Compared to other varieties it fetches better prices and is usually grown by cultivators as a money crop.

One of the major aims of the Agricultural Department has been to spread the Kolamba type of rice as wide as possible. This has been achieved by releasing improved early and late strains of Kolamba. The Department had still on hand the problem to evolve a type possessing fine grains combined with high yield and early maturity which would replace mid-late coarse grained varieties extensively grown in the two districts. Exploitation of the local Kolamba material was of no avail in this direction. Hybridization was the only alternative.

Although many crosses were made, only one of these, involving a late, fine grained and high yielding Kolamba strain, K 226, and a mid-late, coarse but long grained Kolamba, K 164, yielded desirable combinations. From this cross two promising fine grained cultures were obtained. Of these, one proved consistently high yielding and competed successfully with the bold-grained rices. The strain is designated K 540.

The field trials of K 540 in the Thana district proved a great success from the



Kolamba 540.

K 540 is of medium height (140 cm.) with an average of little over 6 tillers per plant. The earheads are very compact (see photograph). The strain ripens in 130 to 135 days. The average length of the grain is 7.59 mm. and breadth 2.17 mm. Seventy-five to seventy-seven grains are required to weigh a gramme, as against thirty-five to fifty grains of the coarse varieties. The natural test weight of paddy of the new strain is 45 lb. per Imperial bushel. The fine quality of K 540 fetches a premium of Rs. 10 to 15 per candy of 1400 lb.

The strain is now spreading rapidly in the two districts of Thana and Kolaba. The

preliminary field trials in Gujrat, Ahmednagar and Ratnagiri districts indicate that K 540 may prove a valuable variety in those regions also.

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