

Identification of Tea Habitat Characteristics in The Kandy Tea Region of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Kandy, which is renowned as a high-quality tea growing region, is located in Sri Lanka's Central province. The objective of this study is to examine basic tea habitat characteristics that affect growing tea in the Kandy region. Secondary data gathered from the literature suggests that the main influencing factors are microclimatic conditions such as temperature, rainfall, and wind, as well as non-microclimatic conditions such as shade, elevation, and soil. Furthermore, literature surveys and topographical map analysis provided substantial information to examine this condition in the Kandy Region. According to the analysis derived from this study, tea grown in the Kandy region is classified as "mid-grown tea", where the elevation of the Kandy region ranges from 650 m to 1,300 m (2,000–4,000 ft). In addition to that, according to research, the southwest monsoon system has a significant impact on the local weather, along with strong winds blowing up the mountain valleys through Kandy itself, which is relatively sheltered. In the Kandy region, there is a 75 mm of > 2,900 mm of annual rainfall. Relatively, January-March are considered dry months with a rainfall of less than 100 mm. According to surveys, the Kandy region has experienced minimum and maximum temperatures of 20.3 °C and 29.1 °C, respectively, with a mean temperature of 24.7 °C. However, Kandy Tea prefers acidic soils with a pH of about 4.5–5.5. Soils should be deep, permeable and well drained, similar to other regions. The soil categories that can be seen in the sub regions of the Kandy region are found as WM1a, WM2b, WM3a, WM3b, IM3a, and IU1. Observations show that the majority of the estates are also clustered in valleys where the wind is less strong in the Kandy region. As a result of that, tea produced in the Kandy region is stronger and darker in color than the other tea regions. The study concludes and recommends that the Kandy region can produce tea with the highest quality as well as more quantity by providing these fundamental tea habitat characteristics, taking these traits into consideration and establishing new plantations.

Keywords: Kandy tea region, tea habitat characteristics, elevation, temperature, rainfall

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