Study Area and Climate

This study was done around Ooty (2312m altitude) in the Nilgiri hills of the Western Ghats (11.15' and 11 22' N and 76.32' to 76 40 E) in Southern India. The soils is lateritic (latosol) with adequate nitrogen and organic matter, but poor in phosphorus (Samraj, 1984; Roychoudhari, et al., 1973). The topography is hilly with slopes 25° to 45° angle.

The climate is monsoonic. Ootacamund receives both south-west and north-east monsoons. The south-west monsoon occurs during June and September and the North-east monsoon occurs during October (fig 2). The annual rainfall in the study area is 2000 mm, of which 65% is received from South-West monsoon and 35% from North-East monsoon. During the winter ground forest is common. The average maximum temperature during the winter (Nov - Feb) was 14°C and the minimum was 3.9°C. The average maximum temperature during the monsoon period (June - Oct) was 16°C and the minimum was 10°C. The brief summer which is warm and dry extends from March to May with strong winds.