









Sheet 4

Changes in farming practices in New Caledonia

The case of the taro patch / field of Canala

Acknowledgements: This fact sheet was produced following a series of interviews with taro growers based in Canala. They have made substantial contribution



The historical method of cultivation: irrigated taro patch terraces

Irrigated taro patch terraces have been following the contours of New Caledonia's landscape for more than a 1,000 years (*Sand et al., 2003*). Particularly well suited to the island's landscape, this type of horticultural installation helps limit soil erosion and facilitates water management.



The taro patches on a flat ground

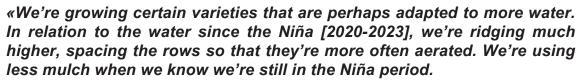
Smaller and closer to dwellings, the proliferation of taro patches on flat ground is a response by farmers to the decline in farm labour and the loss of specific skills.

«Since my two sons left to work in the mines, and another who lives in Noumea, we've never done things the way we used to. All I have left is a small field not too far away». Farmer (aged 51)



The taro patches on a log

Cultivation on ridges (small mounds flattened on top to encourage water run-off and prevent gullying) helps to limit the effects of high humidity or rainfall.





Taro patches on the ridge and mulch

Farmers are already thinking about the future: combining cultivation on beds or ridges and mulching practices means that taro patches are better able to adapt to changing climatic conditions.





