

# Maize Production Training

Maize is versatile and can be grown across a broad range of agro ecological zones. Every part of the maize has economic value.

Maize grows in different soil types but high yields are obtained in deep, fine structured, well aerated and well drained loamy soils that are rich in organic matter. Avoid planting maize in water logged soil, sites with trees, shaded areas, hard pans, muddy and clay soils.

## Maize agronomy

Always carry out soil testing before planting. Collect a good sample at 20 cm and take the sample to the soil research institute for analysis. Land for maize production can be prepared manually or mechanically depending on the history of land. In case the land is sloping, ploughing should be done across and not along the slope to prevent soil erosion. Seed to be planted should be certified and bought from input dealers and a germination test carried out before planting. The planting can be done mechanically or manually by hand at the onset of rains or when rains are expected for drought resistant maize varieties. At planting, apply basal fertilizer at a depth of 10cm, then cover with soil to make a hole of depth 5 cm into which the seed is planted.

Apply 250 kg NPK 10 to 14 days after planting and top dress with 125 kg of ammonium sulphate or 75 kg of urea per hectare.

## Weed control

Weed control should be done as early as possible. This can be done by crop rotation, proper spacing depending on the variety, timely planting, hoeing and hand pulling, application of fertilizer and use of good seed free from weed seeds.

Chemicals can also be used to be used to control weeds.

During the course of growth, plant disease control is important. Immediately remove maize that manifests symptoms of disease eg leaf blight, stock and stem rot.

Maize is harvested manually when it reaches physiological maturity or mechanically when the moisture content drops below between 18 to 24% and then dried down to below 14% for delivery or storage.

Normal well fertilized high producing corn weighs about 300g and has well filled tips. Big ears weighing up to 500g indicate that the plant population was so low and small ears usually are a sign of low fertility.