Making Pawpaw farming profitable on small scale – Part 1

Papaya is a perenial fruit tree and has nutritional and medicinal values. Papaya cannot withstand droughts for long periods as its roots are very sensitive to waterlogging.

Papaya thrives in warm to hot regions of temperatures between 20-30 degrees. In loam soil that is well drained and light with good organic matter. The seeds can be sown directly in the fields or put in a nursery bed, a polythene bag or in containers. Careful handling of seedlings is important in order to avoid disturbing the roots.

Pawpaw planting

The soil in the polythene bags need to have enough organic matter, mixed with manure a bit of NPK fertilizer to enhance fertility in the soil and provide nutrients to the soil.

Dig holes of 60 cm by 60 cm 3 metres apart. After digging the holes separate 1/3 of topsoil to the right hand side and 1/3 of the subsoil to the left hand side.

Adding fertilizers

Mix fertilizer with the top soil and return it to the hole to avoid hard pan.

Place the seedling in the centre of the hole and cover the seedlings firmly. Water the seedling in the morning and evening.

Plant other crops like beans that add nitrogen to the soil. Beans form a canopy that reduces the extra cost of weeding.

Every month apply NPK and foliar to counter deficiencies and infections.

Harvesting Pawpaw

Pawpaw starts flowering 5-8 months after planting and is ready for harvesting after about two months of the flowering stage.

The pawpaw has matured when it starts turning yellow. During harvesting, twist the pawpaw to cut it or one can use a knife.