

## **CUCUMBER FARMING IN KENYA**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

The cucumber is a good source of vitamin C and can be eaten raw, cooked or pickled.

It originated from South East Asia and now grows well at an altitude of 1700m above sea level.



There are three commercial varieties that are available. These are:

- Palomer
- Woodland Crisp
- Early fortune
- Colorado
- Ashley



### **CLIMATE CONDITIONS**

The cucumber crop requires a moderate warm temperature and grows best at a temperature between 20c and 24c. It is not suitable for adverse weather conditions.

### **SUITABLE SOIL**

- Cucumber can be grown in wide varieties of soils from sandy loams to clay soil with good drainage.
- Make sure the soil contains organic matter by adding organic compost or any farm yard manure for higher yields.
- Soil PH should be between 5.5 and 6.7 is favourable for optimum growth.

### **LAND PREPARATION**

Cucumbers are directly sown into the field. Prepare land to a fine tilth early in the season.

### **BEST SEASON AND SEED RATE**

- Sow the cucumber seeds during June or July to April.
- You need about 500g of Cucumber seeds per acre
- Buy certified seeds like GREEN ZUCHINNI from royal seeds.

### **SOWING METHOD**

- The cucumber seed is planted directly to the field due to its delicate nature.
- Use a spacing of 1.5m - 2.5m (row to row) by 60cm - 90cm (plant to plant).
- Two to three cucumber seeds are sown in each planting hole..

### **MANURE AND FERTILIZER APPLICATION**

- You require 40-50 wheelbarrow well decomposed farm yard manure.
- 25kg P/ha 50kg N, should be given  $\frac{1}{2}$  N and full phosphorous should be given at the time of sowing cucumber seeds and remaining half N should be given 30 days after sowing seeds.

### **STAKING.**

Cucumbers need support as the vines are weak. Train to suspend the fruits and control disease.



### **IRRIGATION**

- Drip irrigation is the most effective method for cucumber farming.
- Crop irrigation should be given to maintain moisture at all times apart from the rainy seasons.

### **WEED CONTROL**

- Shallow cultivation can be given during early stages of cucumber plant growth to control weeds.
- Use a jembe or hand weed gently as the plant has very delicate vines.

### **PEST AND DISEASES CONTROL**

- The common disease is Downy mildew. To control, spray with MASTER 72 WP



- The main pest is fruit fly and melon flies. Control by:
  1. Picking the affected cucumbers and destroying
  2. Applying Neem
  3. Spraying ASATAF to control the fruit flies and other insects that may attack your cucumber.

#### **HARVESTING AND YIELD OF CUCUMBERS.**

- Harvesting 40 to 45 days after sowing
- Timely picking of cucumber is more important for better quality of fruit and can yield 8-10 tonnes per hectare.

#### **MARKETING CUCUMBERS**

- Cucumber is in good demand in local markets, and can be transported via trucks.