

Grow Better Cowpeas variety in the North Rift Valley

Cowpeas do well in low, dry areas. They grow well in soils with good drainage.

Why grow cow peas

- People can eat the young leaves and grains. The leaves provide protein, vitamins and minerals.
- The plant increases soil fertility by adding nitrogen.
- The plant covers the ground and stops rain running off and carrying the soil away.
- Cowpea reduces weeds when grown with other crops like cassava, maize and sorghum.

How to grow cowpeas

- Plant cowpeas at a spacing of 2 feet by 1 foot between plants.
- On poor soils, apply up to 40 gogos (80 kg) single superphosphate per acre.
- You can intercrop cowpeas with maize, sorghums or millets.



The harvested stems and tops can be used as livestock feed.

Cowpea disease

Disease	Symptom	Control
Zonate leaf spot	Brown spots on leaves and pods	Use resistant varieties
Pseudo rust (Scab)	Raised, warty, brown scabs on stems and pods	Use resistant varieties
Powdery mildew	White, mildew visible on lower surface	Spray with Dinocap, Benomyl or Triadimefon

Growing the new variety is profitable

Farmers in Marakwet District got 3 shillings for every 1 shilling they spent in cowpea production (1997 prices).

Spend earn

Wear protective clothing, mask and gloves when applying chemicals. Follow manufacturers' instructions carefully.

GROW NEW COWPEA VARIETIES		
Variety	Days to harvest	Yield Bags/Acre
Kitui Black Eye	65-75	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Good tolerance to pests and diseases.- Grain and leaves used for food.- Mixed cropping stops weeds and increases soil fertility.		
M66	85-95	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Good tolerance to pests and diseases.- Grain and leaves used for food.- Mixed cropping stops weeds and increases soil fertility.		
Zebra	75-85	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Good tolerance to pests and diseases.- Grain for food.		
Randa	65-75	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fair tolerance to pests and diseases.- Grain for food.		
KVU-419	65-75	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fair tolerance to pests and diseases.- Grain for food.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KVU-419, Randa and Zebra have medium size grains while Kitui black eye has large grains.• Randa and KVU-419 taste better and cook faster.		

COWPEA PESTS

Pest	Symptom	Control
American Bollworm	Green or brown caterpillars with pale stripes; they feed on flowers, buds & pods.	Spray with Fenvalerate, Etmethrin, Quinalphos, Methadion or Cypermethrin
Thrips	Tiny black insects. They feed in flower buds and flowers, causing flowers to fall off early and pods do not form.	As above
Maruca	Light brown caterpillars with black head and irregular black spots feed on buds & seed.	As above
Pollen and Blister Beetles	Black & yellow or black & red beetles eat the flowers.	Spray with Diazinon, Fenthion, Fenitrothion or Trichlorphon
Spiny Brown Bugs	Brown bugs suck flowers buds and pods	As above

How to harvest and store cowpeas

- * Pick leaves when they are young and tender.
- * You can pick leaves up to 3 times without affecting grain yields.
- * Do not pick leaves within 2 weeks of spraying with chemicals.
- * Harvest pods when they are ripe.
- * Dry the seeds thoroughly before storing.

Where to obtain cowpeas

Contact your local extension agent or KARI/Kitale for details.

Compiled by C Lusweti and TK Kwambai Acknowledgements C Nkonge, P Omolo and P Osore

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

KARI/KITALE PO BOX 450 KITALE

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