

Maize

(*Zea mays*)

Maize is an ideal fodder crop because of its quick growth, high yielding, palatable and nutritious character. It can be grown throughout the year with assured irrigation facility. It produces good quality herbaceous fodder with high digestibility.

Climate: Maize is adapted to varied soil and climatic conditions. Well drained loamy soils are most suitable for this crop. Clayey soil or saline soil or alkaline soils are not suitable for maize crop. It grows well at temperature 10°C to 40°C.

Land Preparation: Very fertile loamy, well drained, leveled soil with neutral to slightly acidic reaction is best suited for its growth. Alluvial or red soils or sandy loam soils with sufficient organic manure or black soils with drainage are also good for its growth. One operation with soil turning plough followed by two cross harrowing and leveling are adequate to get a weed free and leveled seed bed.

Improved varieties:

Area of cultivation	Varieties
Entire country	African Tall, Vijai, Moti and Jawahar composite
Punjab	J-1006
Hilly areas	VL-54
South zone	APFM-8
North-west zone	Pratap Makka Chari-6

Sowing time: For summer sowing in irrigated areas, last week of February to last week of March-April is the appropriate time. Rainy season crop is sown with the beginning of rains in June-July. Rabi crop is sown in the month of October-November particularly in eastern and southern parts of country. In hills sowing is taken up in May.

Seed rate: Seed rate is 50-60 kg/ ha.

Sowing method: Maize is a bold seeded crop and hence, the seed rate of the crop depends upon the size of the seed. Normally 40-50 kg of seed rate is recommended for optimum plant stand in a hectare. The seed should be sown in lines spaced at 30-40 cm.

Manures and fertilizers: 10 tonnes/ ha of FYM is to be applied at the time of final land preparation. This crop requires (kg/ha) about, 140 kg urea, 87 kg DAP and 67kg MOP (NPK: 80:40:40).

Irrigation: It requires 5-6 irrigations at 10-12 days interval during summer season, 3-4 during winter and 1-2 during rainy season. In excess rainfall areas, proper drainage facility should be assured.

Harvesting: Harvest is done at 50% flowering stage (around 65-70days) for fodder purpose.

Yield: Green fodder yield: 350-450 quintals/ha.

Intercropping: Can be intercropped with legumes (cowpea, rice bean etc.). Ratio- Maize: cowpea/ rice bean is 2:2.

