Tips for planting

good maize

For farmers in Western Kenya
Land preparation

Select field with moderate to high fertility.

Prepare field by breaking soil into medium lumps.

Plough in crop residues and vegetation to improve soil fertility.

If soil is acidic, broadcast 5 bags (50 kg bags) of agricultural lime per acre.
Seed selection

Use certified seed varieties recommended for your area.

Test seed for germination before the start of the rainy season. Plant 100 seeds, if at least 90 emerge, then the seed is good to plant.
Plant at the start of the rainy season.

NOTE: Plant maize with another legume or rotate maize fields with legumes or non-cereal crops in the next season to improve soil fertility.

Mark rows at a spacing of 75 cm. Within rows, space holes at 25 cm apart for 1 seed per hill or 50 cm apart for 2 seeds per hill.

Make a 5 cm hole, put in fertilizer and cover with soil. Place in the seed and then cover. For good population, an extra seed can be placed in every second hole.

NOTE: Thinning and gapping can be done soon after emergence.
Fertilizer application

If spacing is 75 cm by 25 cm, apply 50 kg DAP per acre at planting (1 bottle top that is not heaped, per hole).

Top dress with 50 kg CAN per acre (1 bottle top that is not heaped per hole) 4-5 weeks after emergence.

Apply at least a handful of manure per hole.

NOTE: Fertilizer should not touch the plant.
Weed control

Keep fields weed free. The first weeding is done 2-3 weeks after emergence.

NOTE: Although there could be more weeds during the rainy season, do not weed more than 3 times.

Plant maize varieties that resist disease and weed attack.

Use Bulldog 4-5 weeks after planting to control stalk borers.

Control Striga by planting KSTP 94 variety or by rotating maize with legumes such as soybean and desmodium.
Timely harvesting is important. Maize is ready for harvest when there is a black spot where the grain touches the cob.

Place cobs on a clean surface. Leave or return stover to the field to improve soil fertility for the next planting season.
Post-harvest management

Sort and dry cobs on a tarpaulin or clean surface.

Shell by hand or by machine. Broken grain attracts pests. Therefore, shell carefully to avoid grain breakage. Dry grain on a clean tarpaulin, sort and winnow.

Applying chemicals (Actellic) helps to control storage pests such as weevils and the great grain borer.

**NOTE:** Proper drying, use of clean surfaces during drying and sorting, and proper shelling also controls storage pests.
Store dry grain in airtight bags or silos to control pests and aflatoxins.

- Place bags on raised platforms.
- For higher income, sell at the right time when the market price is good.