Land clearing

Land clearing

Week 1:

- Land preparation is the first step for your farming venture. If you prepare the land properly, the rest of your farming activities will become much easier to complete.
- Start with clearing or cutting all the tall grasses.
- Remove trees and all heavy bushes and tree stumps.
- Take care to also remove stones and any other obstacles from your field.
- The result should be a field that is ready for ploughing.
- Do not burn the bushes because burning exposes the soil to erosion and also causes loss of soil nutrients.

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First and second ploughing

First and second ploughing

Week 2:

- First ploughing is done before the onset of rains to turn plant material into organic manure while also breaking the soil to allow more water to enter. This process also increases the amount of air available in the soil.
- Depending on the resources available to the farmer, one can use a hand hoe, an ox plough or a tractor with a plough.
- If your field has perennial weeds such as couch grass, spear grass or wandering jew, you need to spray the field using herbicides like glyphosate, round up and weedmaster. Always contact an agriculture extension worker or an agrodealer for more guidance on herbicides.

A germination test should be carried out during this period to ensure that seeds are capable of germinating. It should also be of high germination percentage, not less than 85% in 2 weeks. Contact agro-dealers and seed producers for quality seed.

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Manure application and planting

Manure application and planting

Week 4-5:

- Farmers are encouraged to apply organic fertilizer to improve the soil fertility. This will result in higher yields.

Note: *Other fertilizers can also be good as long as these are also decomposed. Inorganic fertilizers e.g UREA, NPK can also be used but only after advice from your agriculture extension worker or agrodealer.*

Pumpkins are planted by directly sowing the seeds into the mound in the field.

- Pumpkins need spacing of 10ftx10ft or 3mx3m.
- Dig a hole of 2ftx2ft. Fill the hole with manure/fertilizer.
- Open a hole of about 1inch or 2.5cm
- Place 3 seeds in the hole and then cover with soil.

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Mulching pumpkin

Mulching pumpkin

Week 6-7:

Mulching is the covering of soil with grass. Mulching is important because it:

- Prevents weeds from emerging.
- Increases soil fertility.
- Helps the crops retain water for better growth and yield.

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Weeding and thinning

Weeding and thinning

Week 8:

- Timely weeding will lead to increased yields because it will minimize competition for nutrients and light between the pumpkin plant and weeds.
- Weeding will also reduce pest and disease infestation at the early stages which will again lead to increased yields.
- Weeding should be done as soon as weeds emerge and especially before the flowering of weeds. This will reduce the spreading of the weeds.
- Thinning is done at the time of weeding. During thinning the less vigorous, off-types or relatives and diseased plants are also removed.

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Pest and disease management

Pest and disease management

Week 9:

- Pest and disease management should be continous.
- Both organic and inorganic pesticides can be used to control pests and diseases.
- It is recommended to always seek advise from extension/technical staff on pest and disease identification and management.

Note: *The farmer should monitor the field to ensure quick action is taken in case of break out of pests and diseases.*

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Harvesting pumpkin

Short term

Long term

Harvesting pumpkin

Week 12-24:

Pumpkin is ready for harvest starting from 3-4 weeks after germination. The crop can be harvested in two ways:

Week 12-16: Start plucking leaves as early as 3-4 weeks after the plant germinates. Pick the tender leaves from the tip of the plant and skin the stem to remove long hairs. Remember to leave at least 3 leaves and a bud for re-growth. Wash them and chop the leaves and the stems into very small pieces. Prepare into a stew using spices.

Young fruits: When harvesting, pick healthy young fruits that still have the flower with it. Fruits are ready for harvest as a vegetable at 3-4 weeks after planting. The young fruits are soft and can be prepared by slicing into smaller pieces and boiled.

Week 24: Harvest only mature fruits by checking the pale holder to the fruit or listen to the sound when you hit it. Mature pumpkins make a hollow sound when slapped.

Only collect seeds from healthy and fully mature plants.

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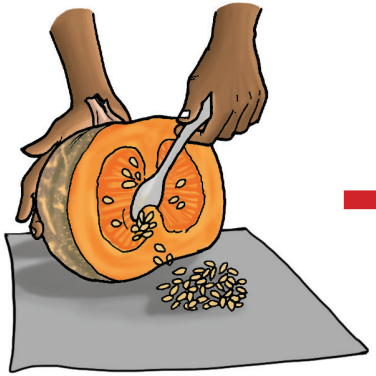
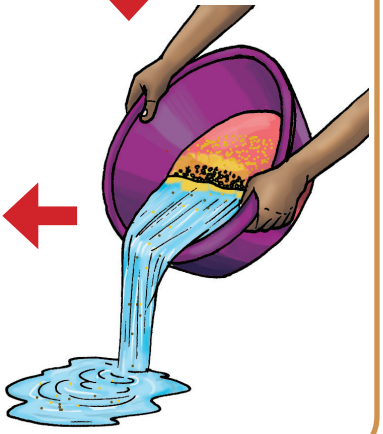
Pumpkin seed processing and storage



Remove floating seeds and the flesh particles



Pumpkin seed processing and storage

Week 28:

Step 1: Identify mature fruits by checking the pale holder to the fruit or listen to the sound when you hit it. Mature pumpkins make a hollow sound when slapped. Harvest only the mature fruits.

Step 2: Cut the fruit open to extract fresh fruits using a stick or a knife. Extract the seeds by scooping the seeds on a flat surface or a basin of water and rub gently, do this several times till the seeds are completely detached from flesh particles.

Step 3: Stir to allow the pieces of flesh and skin sticking on the seeds to float. Gently remove the floating fruit skin and seed and then and tilt the container to allow any other floating seeds to pour out. The quality seeds will remain at the bottom. Repeat the washing several times with fresh water until all the flesh and skin are completely removed.

Step 4: Place the washed seeds in a bag or cotton cloth and hang in the shade for about 24 hours to remove excess water.

Step 5: Place the partially dried seeds on a flat plastic surface like a tarpaulin which is raised off the ground and not under direct sun light. Loosen any clump of seeds and stir 2 to 3 times daily so that seeds dry uniformly.

Step 6: Clean and package the seeds and store them in a cool, well ventilated and dry place.

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