

□ When piecemeal harvesting (i.e., removing the big roots), make sure you cover any cracks on the mounds/ridges. This is because weevils enter through the cracks and cause damage to storage roots. Use a sharp stick to harvest roots that can last for 2 or 3 days, to avoid wastage through rotting. A hoe is used when harvesting part of or entire garden.

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GROW AND EAT ORANGE FLESHED SWEET POTATO



Introduction

The National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) has identified promising improved sweet potato varieties that are rich in Vitamin A, for the people of Uganda. These include Ejumula, SPKOO4 (Kakamega) and Sowola - 6.

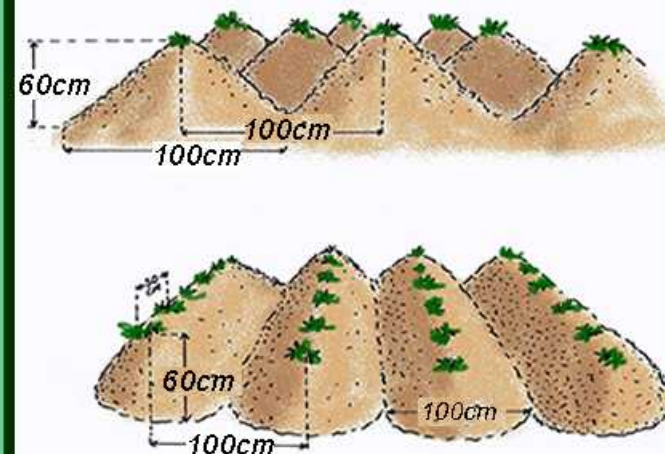
According to joint evaluation by farmers and researchers, the orange-fleshed varieties give yield of up to 20 tons per hectare (80 bags per acre). They are resistant to major pests and diseases, and storage roots are starchy, sweet and easy to cook. They take 4 months (120 days) from planting to harvesting in warm areas of the country. Sweet potatoes are relatively easy to grow and yield better than most crops on soils that are less fertile.

A study conducted in western Kenya by the International Potato Center (CIP) under the Vitamin A for Africa (VITAA) Partnership demonstrated that the daily addition of less than 100 grams of orange-fleshed sweet potato to the diet could prevent vitamin A deficiency in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), evidence exists that the orange fleshed varieties may also have a major impact on other diseases, such as limiting the transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus from pregnant mothers to their babies and reducing the effect of anemia (not enough blood) and malaria.

Sweet Potato Production Guidelines

- Select a field that is not near an old crop, but has easy to cultivate soil, and does not hold excess water. Sandy loam soils are the best for the crop.
- Ensure deep cultivation to promote good drainage and encourage proper growth and expansion of storage roots.
- Make mounds, or ridge seedbed type (if you have or can higher an ox-plough). Mounds and ridges should be 100 cm(3ft) wide and 60 cm(2ft) high, with 100 cm distance between mounds or ridges. Mounds are suitable for areas that are flat or have mole/root rat problem. Ridges are suitable for hilly or sloping land to control soil erosion



- Plant early so that the crop is ready for harvesting before the dry season starts. Damage by weevils can be reduced.
- Although sweet potato can with stand weed competition, it is advisable to practice timely weeding – do it within the first 6 weeks after planting, to ensure good yields.
- Remove any diseased (abnormal plants) during this period.
- If there are signs of damage by caterpillars of the sweet potato butterfly, pick the pests and crush them. However, if the infestation is rather heavy, spray with Ambush, following the recommended amount indicated by the manufacturer on the container label or extension agent in your area.