

# FarmLens Ltd

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Crop details

## Cardamom

*Elettaria cardamomum*

Family: Zingiberaceae

Categories

Spices & Condiments

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### Quick stats

<b>Family</b>	Zingiberaceae
<b>Typical harvest</b>	0.8 t/ha
<b>Varieties</b>	3
<b>Pests and diseases</b>	5
<b>Seasons</b>	3

### Crop profile

<b>Growth habit</b>	perennial
<b>Days to harvest</b>	365
<b>Main uses</b>	Green/ dried capsules for spice, beverages and flavouring.
<b>Pollination</b>	insect
<b>Origin and where it grows</b>	Grows in cool, humid, shaded high rainfall zones; niche pockets exist in East African highlands with forest shade or agroforestry.

### Weather, soil and spacing

<b>Best temperature</b>	18 - 28 °C
<b>Rainfall</b>	1800 - 3000 mm/yr
<b>Altitude</b>	600 - 1800 m
<b>Best pH</b>	5.5 - 6.5
<b>Soil type</b>	Deep, well-drained forest loam with very high organic matter; thrives under shade.
<b>Row spacing</b>	200 cm
<b>Plant spacing</b>	200 cm
<b>Planting depth</b>	5 cm
<b>Seed rate</b>	kg/ha (check local recommendation)

### Simple notes for farmers

**About the crop:** This crop is perennial; once planted it can keep producing for many years. Harvest typically starts about 365 days after planting.

**Main use:** Farmers mostly grow this crop for green/ dried capsules for spice, beverages and flavouring..

**Pollination:** Mainly insect; healthy flowers and pollinators improve fruit set.

**Where it grows:** Grows in cool, humid, shaded high rainfall zones; niche pockets exist in East African highlands with forest shade or agroforestry.. Grouped under: Spices & Condiments.

**Best climate:** 18 - 28 °C; 1800 - 3000 mm/yr; up to about 1800 m a.s.l.

**Soil:** Best at pH 5.5 - 6.5; deep, well-drained forest loam with very high organic matter; thrives under shade..

### **Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)**

<b><u>Planting</u></b>	Use healthy suckers/seedlings from disease-free clumps. Plant at onset of rains under filtered shade. Incorporate lots of compost/mulch and keep beds raised on slopes.
<b><u>Transplanting</u></b>	Firm soil around clumps; provide temporary shade screens if needed.
<b><u>Irrigation</u></b>	Keep soil moist at flowering and capsule filling. Mulch thickly to conserve moisture.
<b><u>Fertigation</u></b>	Split small feeds through the season; more N early for tillering, K around flowering for capsule set and quality.
<b><u>Pest scouting</u></b>	Scout for capsule/shoot borers, thrips (bronzing), aphids and rhizome rots. Remove heavily infested shoots.
<b><u>Pruning and training</u></b>	Maintain shade at ~50–60%; remove dry/old pseudostems and keep clumps open.
<b><u>Harvest</u></b>	Pick capsules every 2–3 weeks when well formed but still green. Dry promptly to retain colour and aroma.
<b><u>Postharvest</u></b>	Wash lightly, blanching optional, then dry in solar/air dryers at low temperature until brittle; store airtight.

### **Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)**

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal before rains	0	NPK 15-15-15 + compost	150 kg/ha (plus 6–10 t/ha compost)	N: 22, P?O?: 22, K?O: 22	Blend lightly; avoid root injury.
2	Early topdress	60	CAN 26% N	120 kg/ha	N: 31, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply on moist soil; mulch back.
3	K boost at flowering	120	Sulfate of potash (SOP)	120 kg/ha	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 60	Improves capsule set and colour.

### **Nutrient requirements**

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	30	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress_early	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Topdress_early	10	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress_early	40	kg/ha
N	Flowering_fill	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Flowering_fill	0	kg/ha
K?O	Flowering_fill	40	kg/ha

## Field images



## Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Malabar-type selection	KE	730	Good aroma; suited to shade gardens.
Njallani/Green Gold type	TZ	730	High tillering, bold capsules where adapted.
Local small cardamom selection	UG	730	Locally adapted under agroforestry shade.

## Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Basal	NPK 15-15-15 + compost	150	With heavy organic mulch.
Topdress	CAN 26% N	120	At 2 months after planting/flush.
Flowering/fill	SOP (K?SO?)	120	Supports capsule formation and quality.

## Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Shoot and capsule borer	pest	Bored shoots/capsules; webbing and frass; reduced set.	Remove infested shoots; maintain shade and sanitation; use recommended selective controls when needed.
Thrips	pest	Silvery/bronzed capsule surface; scarring and shrivelled pods.	Keep humidity with mulch/shade, encourage natural enemies; targeted sprays if heavy.
Aphids	pest	Sticky honeydew, sooty mould; virus risk.	Control ants, spot treat; remove highly infested shoots.
Rhizome/soft rot (Pythium complex)	disease	Yellowing, lodging; soft, foul-smelling rhizomes.	Well-drained beds, clean planting material, remove affected clumps quickly.
Leaf blotch/anthracnose	disease	Brown lesions on leaves; premature drying.	Improve airflow and shade balance; protectants during wet spells if required.

## Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes
Low-input shade gardens	0.35	0.2	0.5	Basic mulching and weeding; minimal fertilizer.

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Managed plantations (rainfed)	0.7	0.4	1	Shade regulation, manuring and pest control.
Intensive with irrigation	1.2	0.8	1.5	Good clonal material, steady moisture, careful harvest/drying.

### Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	Humid forest margins (high rainfall highlands)	Onset of long rains under shade trees.	Multiple pickings over 4–6 months once bearing.
TZ	Southern/Northern highlands with shade	Start of main rains; irrigated pockets can stagger.	Regular pickings during flush seasons.
UG	Moist highlands with agroforestry	At onset of reliable rains under filtered shade.	Green capsule harvests every 2–3 weeks in season.

### Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Forest-edge highlands with reliable rainfall	High
TZ	Southern & Northern highlands (shaded valleys)	High
UG	Moist highland agroforestry belts	High

Source: **FarmLens Ltd** - [farmlens.africa](http://farmlens.africa) and [app.farmlens.africa](http://app.farmlens.africa). Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya. This guide was generated from the FarmLens database.