

FarmLens Ltd

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Crop details

Lemongrass

Cymbopogon citratus

Family: Poaceae

Categories

Spices & Condiments

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Quick stats

Family	Poaceae
Typical harvest	30.0 t/ha
Varieties	3
Pests and diseases	4
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Crop profile

Growth habit	perennial
Days to harvest	150
Main uses	Fresh and dried leaves for tea, flavouring, medicinal extracts and essential oil.
Pollination	unknown
Origin and where it grows	Tropical and subtropical regions; widely grown in warm, humid to sub-humid areas with good moisture.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	22 - 30 °C
Rainfall	1000 - 1600 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 2000 m
Best pH	5.5 - 7
Soil type	Well-drained loam or sandy loam, rich in organic matter, allowing strong clump and tiller development.
Row spacing	60 cm
Plant spacing	30 cm
Planting depth	3 cm
Seed rate	600 kg/ha

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is perennial; once planted it can keep producing for many years. Harvest typically starts about 150 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for fresh and dried leaves for tea, flavouring, medicinal extracts and essential oil..

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

Where it grows: Tropical and subtropical regions; widely grown in warm, humid to sub-humid areas with good moisture.. Grouped under: Spices & Condiments.

Best climate: 22 - 30 °C; 1000 - 1600 mm/yr; up to about 2000 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 5.5 - 7; well-drained loam or sandy loam, rich in organic matter, allowing strong clump and tiller development..

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

<u>Planting</u>	Plant healthy, well-rooted slips or splits in moist soil on ridges or flat beds at onset of rains or with irrigation.
<u>Transplanting</u>	Most growers plant splits directly; a nursery is rarely needed.
<u>Irrigation</u>	Keep soil moist but not waterlogged during establishment; provide supplementary irrigation during long dry spells.
<u>Fertigation</u>	Under drip, apply regular light feeds of N and K to encourage tillering and leaf regrowth after cuts.
<u>Pest scouting</u>	Scout for leaf blights, rust, mealybugs and root rots; remove severely affected clumps and improve airflow.
<u>Pruning and training</u>	No pruning beyond regular harvesting; remove dry leaves and lodged stems to reduce disease.
<u>Harvest</u>	First harvest 4–5 months after planting when clumps are well established; subsequent cuts every 6–8 weeks depending on growth.
<u>Postharvest</u>	Harvest in cool hours, bunch or chop, and shade-cure or dehydrate for tea and oil extraction. Avoid piling fresh leaves in wet heaps.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	<u>Stage</u>	<u>DAP</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Targets (kg/ha)</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	Basal at planting	0	NPK 17-17-17 + compost	120 kg/ha (plus 4–6 t/ha compost)	N: 20, P?O?: 20, K?O: 20	Apply along rows and mix lightly into topsoil before planting splits.
2	Tillering topdress	30	CAN 26% N	100 kg/ha	N: 26, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Side-dress on moist soil around clumps; avoid direct contact with stems.
3	Post-cut regrowth feed	75	NPK 20-10-10 or similar	80 kg/ha after main cut	N: 16, P?O?: 8, K?O: 8	Apply after first major harvest to encourage quick regrowth in intensive systems.

Nutrient requirements

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	30	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Topdress_tillering	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Topdress_tillering	10	kg/ha

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
K ₂ O	Topdress_tillering	30	kg/ha
N	After_cut	20	kg/ha
P ₂ O ₅	After_cut	0	kg/ha
K ₂ O	After_cut	40	kg/ha

Field images



Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
East African lemongrass selection	KE	150	Good tillering, suitable for fresh leaves and small-scale oil extraction.
West Indian lemongrass	TZ	150	High citral content; preferred for essential oil production.
Local lemongrass type	UG	160	Adapted local landrace, widely used for homestead tea and medicinal use.

Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 17-17-17 + compost	120	Apply with 4–6 t/ha well-rotted manure or compost before planting.
Tillering	CAN 26% N	100	4–6 weeks after planting or at strong tiller formation.
After cut	NPK 20-10-10	80	After first heavy harvest in intensively managed fields.

Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Leaf blight / leaf spot	disease	Brown or purplish lesions on leaves, leaf drying from tips, reduced tillering.	Improve spacing and airflow, avoid overhead irrigation late in the day, remove heavily infected leaves.
Rust	disease	Small orange-brown pustules on lower leaf surface, yellowing and early leaf senescence.	Use clean planting material, avoid excessive N, and practice timely cutting and sanitation.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Root and crown rot	disease	Wilting clumps, rotted bases, poor regrowth after cutting.	Ensure well-drained soils, avoid waterlogging and replant severely infected spots with healthy slips.
Mealybugs/scale insects	pest	White cottony masses on leaf sheaths, sticky honeydew and sooty mould.	Encourage natural enemies, avoid excessive shade and remove heavily infested tillers.

Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Low-input rainfed (fresh herbage)	15	10	20	Basic manure and weeding; 2–3 cuts per year.
Managed beds with manure + NPK	30	20	40	Good seed splits, weed control and timely topdressing; 3–4 cuts per year.
Intensive irrigated multi-cut	45	30	60	Irrigation + regular fertigation and close spacing; 4–6 cuts per year.

Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	High rainfall highlands & irrigated mid-altitudes	At onset of long or short rains, or any time under irrigation where frost is absent.	First cut 4–5 months after planting; subsequent cuts...
TZ	Southern highlands & northern irrigated belts	Start of main rains or on irrigated fields whenever soil moisture is adequate.	Multiple cuts spread across the year depending on rainfall...
UG	Moist mid-altitudes with good drainage	At onset of reliable rains on well-prepared, friable soils.	First harvest around 5 months, then repeat cuts...

Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Central & Rift highlands; warm mid-altitudes	High
TZ	Southern highlands; coastal and northern irrigated pockets	High
UG	Mid-altitude belts with dependable rainfall and good drainage	High