

# FarmLens Ltd

Website: farmlens.africa | App: app.farmlens.africa | Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya



Crop details

## Watermelon

*Citrullus lanatus*

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Categories

Fruits & Nuts

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### Quick stats

<b>Family</b>	Cucurbitaceae
<b>Typical harvest</b>	25.7 t/ha
<b>Varieties</b>	48
<b>Pests and diseases</b>	80
<b>Seasons</b>	48

### Crop profile

<b>Growth habit</b>	climber
<b>Days to harvest</b>	90
<b>Main uses</b>	Fresh fruit eaten raw, juice, fruit salads and roadside sales.
<b>Pollination</b>	insect
<b>Origin and where it grows</b>	Watermelon (tikiti maji) is widely grown in warm and dry to semi-humid parts of East Africa, especially under irrigation or in sandy riverbeds.

### Weather, soil and spacing

<b>Best temperature</b>	22 - 30 °C
<b>Rainfall</b>	500 - 700 mm/yr
<b>Altitude</b>	0 - 1500 m
<b>Best pH</b>	6 - 6.8
<b>Soil type</b>	Light, sandy to sandy-loam soils that warm up quickly and drain well. Watermelon (tikiti maji) prefers deep soils with good organic matter.
<b>Row spacing</b>	200 cm
<b>Plant spacing</b>	80 cm
<b>Planting depth</b>	3 cm
<b>Seed rate</b>	3 kg/ha

### Simple notes for farmers

**About the crop:** This crop has a growth habit described as "climber". Harvest typically starts about 90 days after planting.

**Main use:** Farmers mostly grow this crop for fresh fruit eaten raw, juice, fruit salads and roadside sales..

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

**Where it grows:** Watermelon (tikiti maji) is widely grown in warm and dry to semi-humid parts of East Africa, especially under irrigation or in sandy riverbeds.. Grouped under: Fruits & Nuts.

**Best climate:** 22 - 30 °C; 500 - 700 mm/yr; up to about 1500 m a.s.l.







#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
3	Pre-flowering boost	35	NPK 12-12-24 or high-K blend	80 kg/ha	N: 10, P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> : 10, K <sub>2</sub> O: 16	Encourages flowering and early fruit set.
3	Pre-flowering boost	35	NPK 12-12-24 or high-K blend	80 kg/ha	N: 10, P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> : 10, K <sub>2</sub> O: 16	Encourages flowering and early fruit set.
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4	Fruit filling high K	50	Sulfate of potash (SOP) or other K source	60 kg/ha	N: 0, P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> : 0, K <sub>2</sub> O: 30	Improves sweetness and rind strength of Watermelon (tikiti maji).
4	Fruit filling high K	50	Sulfate of potash (SOP) or other K source	60 kg/ha	N: 0, P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> : 0, K <sub>2</sub> O: 30	Improves sweetness and rind strength of Watermelon (tikiti maji).
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### Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Basal	40	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Basal	40	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha

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P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
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N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
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P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
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N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
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N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
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P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
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K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
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P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
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P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
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P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Early_growth	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_growth	0	kg/ha
K?O	Early_growth	20	kg/ha
N	Fruiting	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Fruiting	0	kg/ha
K?O	Fruiting	40	kg/ha

### Field images



### Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Sugar Baby–type	KE	75	Small, round fruits with sweet red flesh; good for local markets.
Crimson Sweet–type	TZ	85	Oblong fruits, striped rind, firm red flesh; widely grown under irrigation.
Charleston Grey–type	UG	90	Elongated, large fruits suited to open-field production.
Sugar Baby–type	KE	75	Small, round fruits with sweet red flesh; good for local markets.
Crimson Sweet–type	TZ	85	Oblong fruits, striped rind, firm red flesh; widely grown under irrigation.
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### **Fertilizer recommendations**

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	Well-rotted farmyard manure	8000	Mixed into planting rows or hills before planting Watermelon (tikiti maji).
Basal (inorganic)	NPK 17-17-17	150	Provides starter NPK for early growth.
Topdress (early)	CAN 26% N	60	Applied 2–3 weeks after emergence when vines start to run.
Topdress (fruiting)	High-K fertilizer (e.g., 12-12-24 or SOP blend)	80	Supports fruit filling and sweetness.
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Topdress (early)	CAN 26% N	60	Applied 2–3 weeks after emergence when vines start to run.

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Topdress (fruiting)	High-K fertilizer (e.g., 12-12-24 or SOP blend)	80	Supports fruit filling and sweetness.

## **Pests and diseases**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Aphids	pest	Clusters on tender shoots, curled leaves and sticky honeydew with sooty mould.	Encourage natural enemies, avoid over-fertilizing with nitrogen and use soaps or selective insecticides when numbers are high.
Leafminers and beetles	pest	Silvery tunnels in leaves, holes and ragged leaf edges, slow growth when damage is heavy.	Early scouting, removal of heavily damaged leaves and use of recommended insecticides or biopesticides when needed.
Fruit flies (on ripe fruit)	pest	Stings on rind, internal rotting and maggots in cracked fruits.	Collect and bury or destroy cracked and damaged fruits; use bait traps where pressure is high.
Downy and powdery mildew	disease	Yellow patches or white powder on leaves, leading to early leaf drying and poor fruit filling.	Plant in open, well-aerated fields, avoid overhead irrigation late in the day and apply recommended fungicides/biocontrols at first signs.
Fusarium wilt and vine declines	disease	Sudden wilting of vines, browning in the stem and roots, often patchy in the field.	Practice crop rotation, use clean seed and avoid planting Watermelon (tikiti maji) repeatedly on the same field.
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## Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Rainfed smallholder Watermelon (tikiti maji)	12	8	18	Limited fertilizer and no irrigation; yields strongly affected by rainfall.
Irrigated smallholder production	25	15	35	Good seed, fertilizer and pest control under furrow or drip.
Intensive commercial Watermelon (tikiti maji)	40	30	50	High plant population, drip irrigation and carefully planned nutrition.

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### **Season calendars**

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KE	Arid and semi-arid irrigation schemes	Any time with irrigation; often planned for holiday and dry-season markets.	About 2.5–3 months after planting.
KE	Coastal and lower mid-altitude zones	Onset of short or long rains on well-drained, sandy soils.	Late in the rainy season and early dry season.
TZ	Central and coastal plains with irrigation	Staggered planting to target market windows under irrigation.	2.5–3 months after planting depending on varie
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KE	Coastal and lower mid-altitude zones	Onset of short or long rains on well-drained, sandy soils.	Late in the rainy season and early dry season.
TZ	Central and coastal plains with irrigation	Staggered planting to target market windows under irrigation.	2.5–3 months after planting depending on varie
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### **Region suitability**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Coastal belt and lower eastern/southern drylands	High
TZ	Central semi-arid plains and irrigated valleys	High
UG	Warm lowland areas with irrigation or light soils	Medium

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.