

FarmLens Ltd

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



Crop details

Cabbage

Brassica oleracea var. capitata

Family: Brassicaceae

Categories

Vegetables

Generated: 2026-04-11 08:16

Quick stats

Family	Brassicaceae
Typical harvest	36.7 t/ha
Varieties	3
Pests and diseases	7
Seasons	3

Crop profile

Growth habit	annual
Days to harvest	95
Main uses	Heads eaten raw in salads or cooked as vegetables, used in coleslaw, stews and pickles.
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Cabbage is widely grown in cool and high-altitude vegetable areas in East Africa, often near towns and irrigation schemes.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	15 - 20 °C
Rainfall	600 - 800 mm/yr
Altitude	800 - 2600 m
Best pH	6.2 - 6.8
Soil type	Deep, fertile, well-drained loam or sandy loam with plenty of organic matter so heads can grow firm and heavy.
Row spacing	60 cm
Plant spacing	45 cm
Planting depth	1.5 cm
Seed rate	0.5 kg/ha
Nursery days	30

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is annual; it grows and is harvested in one season. Harvest typically starts about 95 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for heads eaten raw in salads or cooked as vegetables, used in coleslaw, stews and pickles..

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

Where it grows: Cabbage is widely grown in cool and high-altitude vegetable areas in East Africa, often near towns and irrigation schemes.. Grouped under: Vegetables.

Best climate: 15 - 20 °C; 600 - 800 mm/yr; up to about 2600 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6.2 - 6.8; deep, fertile, well-drained loam or sandy loam with plenty of organic matter so heads can grow firm and heavy..

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

<u>Planting</u>	Sow seed in a small nursery bed or trays with fine soil and compost. Keep moist and weed-free. Transplant strong cabbage seedlings with 4–6 true leaves into the field on cool, cloudy days or in the late afternoon.
<u>Transplanting</u>	Water nursery before lifting seedlings. Lift with a small ball of soil, trim very long roots and plant at the same depth as in the nursery. Firm soil gently around the plant and water immediately.
<u>Irrigation</u>	Keep soil evenly moist from transplanting to head formation. Avoid long dry spells followed by heavy watering, as this can cause splitting of cabbage heads.
<u>Fertigation</u>	Under drip, apply small, frequent doses of NPK. Give more nitrogen early for leaf growth, then maintain potassium and calcium during heading to get firm, healthy heads.
<u>Pest scouting</u>	Check cabbage weekly for diamondback moth, caterpillars, aphids and leaf spots. Look at the underside of leaves and in the heart of the plant and act early while damage is still small.
<u>Pruning and training</u>	No pruning needed. Remove very old, yellow or diseased outer leaves and bury or destroy them to lower pest and disease pressure.
<u>Harvest</u>	Harvest cabbage heads when they are firm and full-sized but before they crack. Use a sharp knife to cut the stalk just below the head and remove loose outer leaves.
<u>Postharvest</u>	Do not drop heads. Keep cabbage in shade, pack in crates or sacks with ventilation and store in a cool, well-ventilated place to slow wilting and rots.

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 transplanting	0	NPK 17-17-17 or 15-15-15	250 kg/ha	N: 42, P?O?: 42, K?O: 42	Band along cabbage rows 5–8 cm from the seedling line and cover lightly with soil.
2	Early topdress	21	CAN 26% N	100 kg/ha	N: 26, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply between rows when soil is moist, then irrigate or lightly incorporate.
3	Heading topdress (N + K)	40	NPK 12-6-24 or urea + SOP/MOP	150 kg/ha	N: 18, P?O?: 9, K?O: 36	Supports firm head formation; avoid very late heavy nitrogen to reduce splitting.

Nutrient requirements

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
N	Basal	60	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	70	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	70	kg/ha
N	Topdress_early	50	kg/ha

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
P?O?	Topdress_early	0	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress_early	30	kg/ha
N	Topdress_heading	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Topdress_heading	0	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress_heading	50	kg/ha

Field images



Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Hybrid round green cabbage	KE	85	Round firm heads, good yield and market demand.
Hybrid large drumhead cabbage	KE	95	Very large heads, good for fresh market and hotels.
Local cabbage selection	KE	90	Adapted to local conditions, lower yield than hybrids.

Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 17-17-17 or 15-15-15	250	Provides balanced nutrients for early cabbage growth.
Topdress (N source)	CAN 26% N or urea	100	Apply 1–2 times during vegetative growth based on cabbage colour and vigour.
Topdress (K source)	Sulfate of potash (SOP) or high-K NPK	120	Improves head firmness and shelf life.
Organic	Well-rotted manure or compost	10000	Apply before bed preparation to improve soil structure and water-holding capacity.

Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Diamondback moth	pest	Small caterpillars making window-like holes and small tunnels in cabbage leaves; leaves become ragged and skeletonised.	Use fine netting on nurseries, rotate crops, destroy remains after harvest and use biological or selective insecticides when needed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Cabbage looper and other caterpillars	pest	Large holes in cabbage leaves and feeding in the heart of the plant, with green droppings.	Handpick where possible and use Bt or other recommended insecticides based on scouting.
Cabbage aphids	pest	Grey-green colonies on young leaves and in the head, sticky honeydew and curling of cabbage leaves.	Encourage natural enemies and use selective insecticides or biopesticides if infestations become heavy.
Cutworms	pest	Seedlings or young cabbage plants cut at or near ground level, leaving gaps in the row.	Prepare land early, destroy weeds and apply baits or spot treatments if damage is high.
Black rot	disease	Yellow V-shaped patches on cabbage leaf margins pointing towards the midrib, dark veins and stunting.	Use disease-free seed, rotate with non-cabbage crops and avoid overhead irrigation in the evening.
Downy mildew	disease	Yellow patches on the upper leaf surface with grey-white mould underneath, especially in cool, wet weather.	Improve air movement, avoid overcrowding and use protectant fungicides when conditions favour disease.
Clubroot	disease	Swollen, distorted cabbage roots, wilting in hot weather and poor growth.	Avoid planting cabbage repeatedly on infected land, raise soil pH towards neutral and improve drainage.

Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Open-field cabbage, low input	15	10	20	Local varieties or saved seed, some manure, little fertilizer and basic pest control.
Open-field cabbage, improved management	35	25	45	Hybrid seed, recommended fertilizer, good spacing, regular weeding and pest control.
Irrigated or high-input cabbage	60	40	80	Strong hybrids, drip irrigation, fertigation and strong pest/disease management.

Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	Highland cabbage belt (long rains)	Mar–Apr	Jun–Aug
KE	Highland cabbage belt (short rains)	Sep–Oct	Dec–Feb
TZ	Southern and northern highland cabbage zones	Cooler months with good rainfall or irrigation	About 3 months after transplanting

Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Cool highland vegetable-growing areas	High
KE	Mid-altitude zones with moderate temperatures	High
KE	Very hot, dry lowlands	Low

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
TZ	Highland and peri-urban cabbage belts	High
UG	Cool mid- to high-altitude vegetable zones	High

Source: **FarmLens Ltd** - farmlens.africa and app.farmlens.africa. Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya. This guide was generated from the FarmLens database.