FarmLens Ltd

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

Crop details

Papaya

Carica papaya

Family: Caricaceae

Categories

Fruits & Nuts

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Quick stats

Family	Caricaceae
Typical harvest	50.0 t/ha
Varieties	48
Pests and diseases	96
Seasons	48

Crop profile

Growth habit	tree
Days to harvest	540
Main uses	Ripe fruits eaten fresh, in juice and salads; green fruits cooked as vegetables; leaves and latex used in traditional remedies.
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Papaya (pawpaw) is widely grown in warm lowland and mid-altitude areas of East Africa around homesteads and in small orchards.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	21 - 30 °C
Rainfall	1000 - 1600 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 1600 m
Best pH	6 - 6.8
Soil type	Light to medium, well-drained loam or sandy loam, rich in organic matter. Papaya (pawpaw) does best on deep soils.
Row spacing	250 cm
Plant spacing	250 cm
Planting depth	20 cm
Seed rate	kg/ha (check local recommendation)
Nursery days	45

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop has a growth habit described as "tree". Harvest typically starts about 540 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for ripe fruits eaten fresh, in juice and salads; green fruits cooked as vegetables; leaves and latex used in traditional remedies..

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

Where it grows: Papaya (pawpaw) is widely grown in warm lowland and mid-altitude areas of East Africa around homesteads and in small orchards.. Grouped under: Fruits & Nuts.

Best climate: 21 - 30 °C; 1000 - 1600 mm/yr; up to about 1600 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6 - 6.8; light to medium, well-drained loam or sandy loam, rich in organic matter. papaya (pawpaw) does best on deep soils..

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Raise Papaya (pawpaw) in a nursery and transplant healthy seedlings. Plant 2–3 seedlings per hole at the start of the rains, in well-prepared, manured holes. Later thin to one strong plant.
Transplanting	Transplant when seedlings are 3–4 true leaves. Handle carefully to avoid breaking the soft stem and roots.
Irrigation	Keep soil moist but not waterlogged, especially during establishment, flowering and fruit filling. Mulch around the trees to conserve moisture.
Fertigation	Under drip, give small regular doses of nitrogen and potassium. Increase potassium as more fruits develop on the stem.
Pest scouting	Inspect leaves and fruits every week for aphids, whiteflies, mites, fruit flies and leaf spots. Look at underside of leaves and around young fruits.
Pruning and training	Remove yellow, diseased or broken leaves. Rogue out weak, male-only or diseased plants early to keep a strong stand.
Harvest	Harvest when fruits have turned from dark green to light green–yellow and show some yellow colour at the base. For local markets, fruits can be picked when slightly firm; for home use, allow more yellowing on the tree.
Postharvest	Handle Papaya (pawpaw) gently to avoid bruising. Keep in shade, avoid stacking too high and transport in clean crates rather than sacks.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal at planting	0	Well-rotted manure + P fertilizer (e.g., DAP or TSP)	10 kg/hole manure + 50–100 g P fertilizer	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Mix manure and P well with topsoil in each Papaya (pawpaw) planting hole.
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2	Early topdress	45	CAN 26% N or NPK 17-17-17 (light)	40 g/plant	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply in a ring 20–30 cm from the stem, then cover with soil.
2	Early topdress	45	CAN 26% N or NPK 17-17-17 (light)	40 g/plant	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply in a ring 20–30 cm from the stem, then cover with soil.
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3	Pre-flowering feed	120	NPK 17-17-17 or 15-15-15	80 g/plant	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Encourages strong flowering and early fruit set.
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4	Fruit filling high K	180	High-K fertilizer (e.g., NPK 12-12-24 or SOP blend)	100 g/plant	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Improves fruit size, sweetness and shelf life.
4	Fruit filling high K	180	High-K fertilizer (e.g., NPK 12-12-24 or SOP blend)	100 g/plant	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Improves fruit size, sweetness and shelf life.
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Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Establishment	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Establishment	40	kg/ha
K?O	Establishment	40	kg/ha

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Early_bearing	60	kg/ha
P?O?	Early_bearing	20	kg/ha
K?O	Early_bearing	60	kg/ha
N	Full_bearing	80	kg/ha
P?O?	Full_bearing	25	kg/ha
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K?O	Full_bearing	100	kg/ha

Field images

Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Red Lady–type hybrid	KE	270	Early bearing, sweet orange-red flesh; suitable for fresh market.
Local tall Papaya (pawpaw)	TZ	300	Larger trees with bigger fruits; later bearing but hardy under local conditions.
Solo / small-fruited dessert types	UG	270	Small, sweet fruits; good for household use and local markets.
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Red Lady–type hybrid	KE	270	Early bearing, sweet orange-red flesh; suitable for fresh market.
Local tall Papaya (pawpaw)	TZ	300	Larger trees with bigger fruits; later bearing but hardy under local conditions.
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Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Basal	Well-rotted farmyard manure	8000	Applied in planting holes and around young trees each year.
Vegetative	CAN 26% N or urea	60	Split into 2–3 smaller applications during early growth.
Flowering and fruiting	NPK 17-17-17 or high-K blend	120	Applied in several small dressings during the main fruiting period.
Basal	Well-rotted farmyard manure	8000	Applied in planting holes and around young trees each year.
Vegetative	CAN 26% N or urea	60	Split into 2–3 smaller applications during early growth.
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Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Papaya fruit flies	pest	Small puncture marks on fruits, internal rotting and maggots, premature fruit drop.	Collect and destroy infested fruits, use bait traps, field sanitation and recommended fruit fly control products.
Aphids and whiteflies	pest	Clusters on young leaves, curling leaves, sticky honeydew and sooty mould.	Encourage natural enemies, avoid unnecessary broad-spectrum sprays and use soaps or selective insecticides when needed.
Red spider mites	pest	Yellow speckling, bronzed leaves, fine webbing and leaf drop in dry weather.	Maintain good moisture, avoid dusty conditions and use specific miticides or biopesticides if infestations are severe.
Papaya ringspot–like virus	disease	Mottled leaves, distorted growth, ring-like markings on fruits and reduced yield.	Use tolerant varieties if available, control aphids as vectors and remove very sick plants to reduce spread.
Anthracnose and fruit rots	disease	Dark spots and rots on ripening fruits, especially after harvest.	Harvest carefully, avoid injuries, keep fruits dry and cool and use approved fungicides/biocontrols when necessary.
Stem and root rots	disease	Collar rots at the stem base, wilting and plant collapse, often in poorly drained spots.	Improve drainage, avoid waterlogging and do not plant Papaya (pawpaw) in depressions or heavy, poorly drained soils.
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Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes
Scattered homestead Papaya (pawpaw)	20	10	30	Few trees around homesteads; limited pruning and fertilization.
Managed smallholder papaya block	50	30	70	Good spacing, improved varieties, manuring/fertilizer and basic pest control.
Intensive irrigated papaya	80	60	100	Irrigation, fertigation and strong pest and disease management.
Scattered homestead Papaya (pawpaw)	20	10	30	Few trees around homesteads; limited pruning and fertilization.
Managed smallholder papaya block	50	30	70	Good spacing, improved varieties, manuring/fertilizer and basic pest control.
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Intensive irrigated papaya	80	60	100	Irrigation, fertigation and strong pest and disease management.
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Season calendars

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Warm lowland and mid-altitude Papaya (pawpaw) zones	Best at onset of long or short rains; can be staggered for continuous supply.	Fruiting starts about 9–12 months after planting

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
TZ	Coastal belt and warm mid-altitude areas	Onset of rainy seasons on well-drained soils.	Spread through the year once plants are establis
UG	Warm low to mid-altitude zones	Start of main rains; avoid very waterlogged sites.	Year-round with peaks after rainy seasons.
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Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Coastal and lower mid-altitude Papaya (pawpaw) belt	High
TZ	Coastal regions and warm inland valleys	High
UG	Warm lowland and mid-altitude farming areas	High

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