FarmLens Ltd

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

Crop details

Spineless Cactus

Opuntia ficus-indica

Family: Cactaceae

Categories

Forages & Fodder

Generated: 2026-04-11 06:40

Quick stats

Family	Cactaceae
Typical harvest	25.0 t/ha
Varieties	1
Pests and diseases	2
Seasons	1

Crop profile

Growth habit	perennial
Days to harvest	365
Main uses	Drought-buffer fodder and fruit from cladodes in arid livestock systems.
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Adopted in arid and semi-arid East African counties for feed resilience.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	20 - 36 °C
Rainfall	250 - 700 mm/yr
Altitude	800 - 2800 m
Best pH	6 - 7
Soil type	Fertile well-drained loam rich in organic matter.
Row spacing	40 cm
Plant spacing	20 cm
Planting depth	1.5 cm
Seed rate	4 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 365 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for drought-buffer fodder and fruit from cladodes in arid livestock systems..

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

Where it grows: Adopted in arid and semi-arid East African counties for feed resilience.. Grouped under: Forages & Fodder.

Best climate: 20 - 36 °C; 250 - 700 mm/yr; up to about 2800 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6 - 7; fertile well-drained loam rich in organic matter..

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Establish Spineless Cactus in a fine weed-free seedbed and keep emergence moisture steady.
Transplanting	Direct seed or transplant depending on production system.
Irrigation	Maintain even soil moisture for steady Spineless Cactus growth and quality.
Fertigation	Use split nitrogen and potassium for market-quality Spineless Cactus.
Pest scouting	Scout Spineless Cactus weekly for chewing pests, sap suckers, and foliar diseases.
Pruning and training	No pruning required unless sanitation or staking is needed.
Harvest	Harvest Spineless Cactus at market maturity for the intended use.
Postharvest	Cool and shade Spineless Cactus promptly after harvest.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

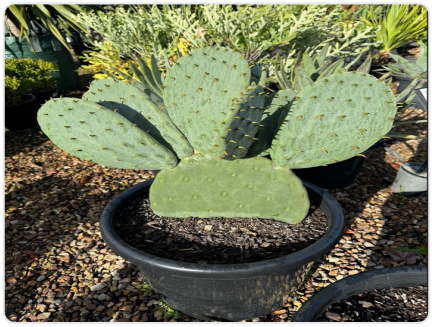
#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 17-17-17	200 kg/ha	N: 34, P?O?: 34, K?O: 34	Basal fertilizer for Spineless Cactus.
2	Topdress	21	CAN	100 kg/ha	N: 26, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Support active Spineless Cactus vegetative growth.

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	35	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	30	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	35	kg/ha
N	Topdress	25	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress	20	kg/ha

Field images





Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits

Spineless Opuntia	KE	365	High-moisture cladodes for drought feeding.

Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Planting	Well-rotted manure	5000	Improve soil structure before Spineless Cactus planting.
Vegetative growth	CAN	100	Split topdress for Spineless Cactus production.

Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Aphids	pest	Leaf curling and sticky honeydew.	Scout frequently and use selective control when pressure builds.
Leaf spot complex	disease	Necrotic spotting and reduced leaf quality.	Improve airflow, rotate crops, and avoid prolonged leaf wetness.

Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes
Managed fresh-market production	25	17.5	37.5	Typical marketable Spineless Cactus yield under irrigated or well-managed conditions.

Season calendars

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Highland Vegetable Zones	Mar-Apr or Oct-Nov	Year-round depending on irrigation

Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Highland Vegetable Zones	High

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