FarmLens Ltd

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Crop details

Desmodium

Desmodium intortum / uncinatum

Family: Fabaceae

Categories

Legumes & Pulses | Forages & Fodder

Generated: 2026-04-11 04:46

Quick stats

Family	Fabaceae
Typical harvest	9.8 t/ha
Varieties	2
Pests and diseases	2
Seasons	2

Crop profile

Growth habit	perennial
Days to harvest	120-365+
Main uses	Forage; intercrop (push–pull)
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Tropical Americas; grown in Africa

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	18 - 26 °C
Rainfall	900 - 1500 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 2200 m
Best pH	5.5 - 6.8
Soil type	Well-drained loam; tolerates acidity
Row spacing	50 cm
Plant spacing	25 cm
Planting depth	1.5 cm
Seed rate	6 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 120-365+ days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for forage; intercrop (push–pull).

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

Where it grows: Tropical Americas; grown in Africa. Grouped under: Legumes & Pulses, Forages & Fodder.

Best climate: 18 - 26 °C; 900 - 1500 mm/yr; up to about 2200 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 5.5 - 6.8; well-drained loam; tolerates acidity.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Establish Desmodium 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 Desmodium growth and quality.
Fertigation	Use split nitrogen and potassium for market-quality Desmodium.
Pest scouting	Scout Desmodium weekly for chewing pests, sap suckers, and foliar diseases.
Pruning and training	No pruning required unless sanitation or staking is needed.
Harvest	Harvest Desmodium at market maturity for the intended use.
Postharvest	Cool and shade Desmodium promptly after harvest.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 12-24-12	60 kg/ha	N: 34, P?O?: 34, K?O: 34	Basal fertilizer for Desmodium.
2	Topdress	21	CAN	100 kg/ha	N: 26, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Support active Desmodium vegetative growth.

Nutrient requirements

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

Field images



Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Silverleaf	KE	150	Forage; push–pull
Greenleaf	KE	120	Climbing fodder legume for push-pull and cut feed.

Fertilizer recommendations

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

Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Aphids	pest	Honeydew; sooty mold	Natural enemies; light sprays
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
forage/intercrop	12	6	20	Fresh biomass; high protein
Managed fresh-market production	7.5	5.3	11.3	Typical marketable Desmodium yield under irrigated or well-managed conditions.

Season calendars

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Dairy belts/maize zones	Onset of rains	Cut every 6–8 weeks
KE	Highland Vegetable Zones	Mar-Apr or Oct-Nov	Year-round depending on irrigation

Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Dairy belts/maize zones	High
KE	Highland Vegetable Zones	High