Scheduled Planting and Harvest Recommendations for Cassava

Choosing the right time to plant and harvest your cassava is one of the most important decisions to make. The root yield and revenue you obtain from your crop depend on when you plant and harvest.

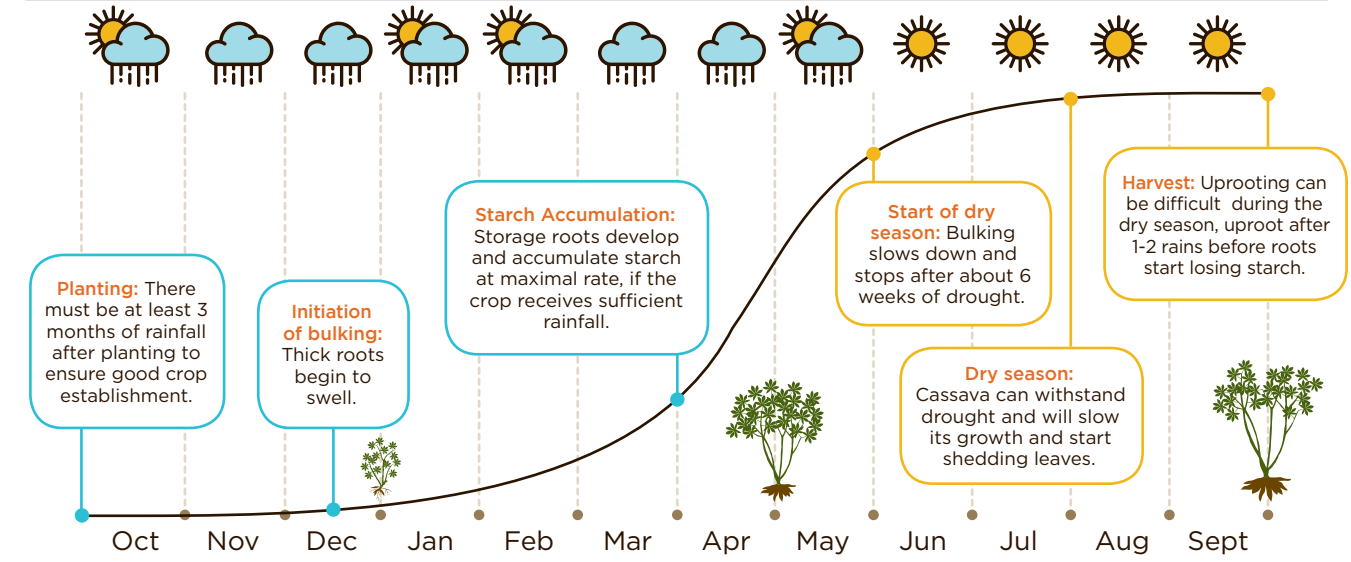
Consider these 3 aspects:

- Impact of weather
- Implications on cultivation practices
- Outlet market and price considerations

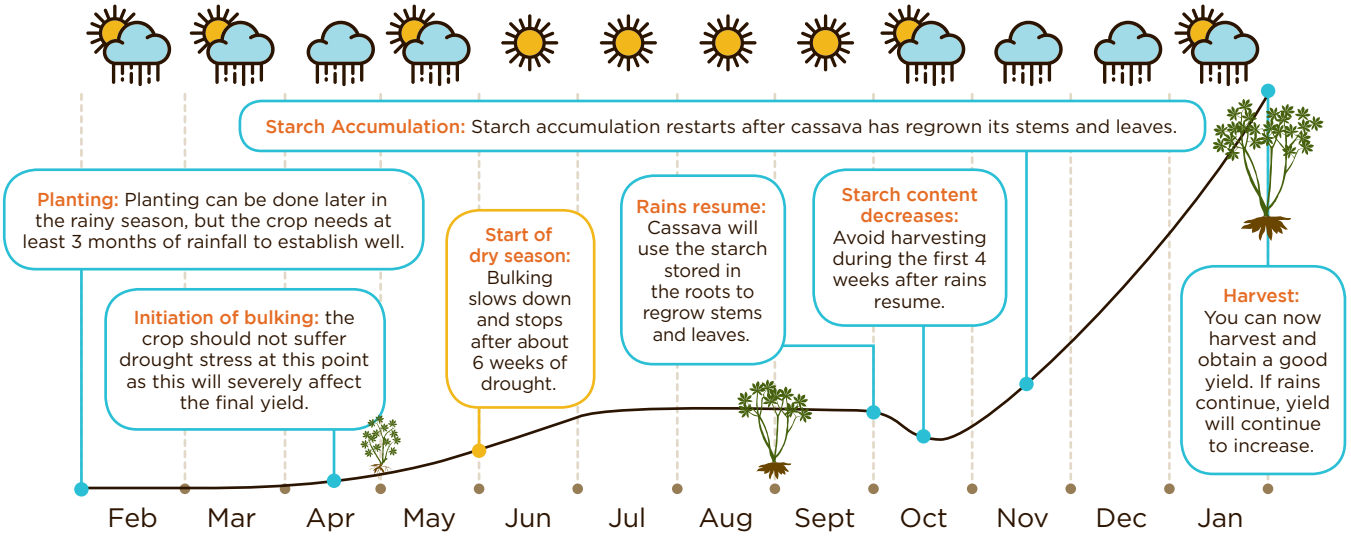
Impact of Weather

Cassava changes its growth dependent on when it receives rain (see examples below). You must consider the rainfall pattern to decide when to plant and harvest your cassava crop.

Example 1: Planting at the beginning of the rainy season



Example 2: Planting in the middle of the rainy season



In some soils, planting late in the rainy season (April or May) is possible if the soil is deep and loamy and has stored a lot of moisture during the rainy season. In such soils, the cassava can establish with little rain, and wait for the start of the next rainy season.

Implications on Cultivation Practices

The planting and harvest schedule has important implications on cultivation practices

Land clearing. Clearing land by slashing is typically easier in the dry season. However, the vegetation must be lush and green for herbicides to work effectively.

Tillage operations. Ploughing must be done while the soil is moist. Ridging will help avoid breakage and make it easier to pull roots out of dry and heavy clay soils.

Weed control. Good weed control is critical during the first months after planting. See our recommendations on *Best Planting Practices and Weed Management* for more details.

Fertilizer application. Plant your cassava early enough in the rainy season to ensure enough rainfall during the first 4 months for the fertilizer to dissolve. See our recommendations on *Tailored fertilizer application recommendations for cassava* for more details.

Pest and disease management. During the drought period, younger plants are more susceptible to damage by pests than older plants. Always avoid planting close to older cassava fields that show severe disease symptoms and obtain disease-free cuttings of a disease tolerant variety such as Mkombozi, Mkuranga 1 or Kiroba from a certified source.

Outlet Market and Price Considerations

Consider the month in which you intend to plant, and the age of the crop when you intend to harvest. Use the tables in the separate flyer to evaluate the expected root yield for your choice of planting and harvest schedule. Now evaluate how your root yield changes if you postpone or bring forward planting and/or harvest.

Two types of markets can be considered

Selling to a starch processing factory where prices are based on the starch content of the roots. Starch content depends on the rainfall conditions in the last 2-3 months before harvest. Starch content will increase as the crop matures and during the dry season. When rains resume, cassava will use the starch stored in the roots to grow new stems and leaves. Once this has started, starch concentration in the roots will decrease. It is best to delay harvesting for a few months until the cassava has regrown its canopy, and has had time to accumulate starch again.

Selling to a regular fresh root market where prices are fixed based on the unit weight of fresh roots. It's important to be well-informed about price changes throughout the harvest window. Prices are based on demand, so it may be beneficial to delay harvesting if you expect prices to increase.

Revenue for your proposed planting and harvest schedule

Gross Revenue Calculation

Repeat this process using multiple harvest schedules to decide which provides the highest gross revenue.

Price of 1 tonne of cassava roots **(TZS)** **X** Expected yield **(tonnes/ha)** **=** Expected gross value **(TZS)**

Note: The yields from the flyer are averages under adequate management and medium soil fertility. Your root yield and starch content may differ depending on rainfall conditions, the variety grown and your cropping practices.

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