

## NIGER

It is a highly drought tolerant crop with no nagging disease pest problems. It has the ability to suppress weeds to a fair extent. A copious leaf fall helps in soil recuperation. It is also not grazed by the cattle. It is because of these factors that marginal and sub-marginal farmers who are unable to invest in cash inputs, favour this crop.

### Varieties

Sl. No	Name of the variety	Duration (days)	Remarks
1.	GA-10 (Deomali)	110-120	Purple stem, longer yellow ray florets, black shiny seeds
2.	IGP-76 (Sahayadri)	100-105	Greenish purple stem, smaller yellow ray florets, black seeds

## **Land preparation**

Prepare the land to a fine tilth for sowing niger. The field should be completely free of weeds. The land where niger is to be sown should be perfectly well drained.

## **Sowing**

Niger can be sown in July as a border crop around upland *Kharif* crops as cattle do not relish this crop. The main crop is sown from middle of August to early September. Sow the crop in lines 25-30 cm apart with a seed rate of 10 kg/ha.

## **Fertilizer**

Apply FYM @ 5t/ha and a fertilizer dose of 40-20-20 kg N-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>O/ha . Apply full P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>O and half nitrogen as basal and rest half nitrogen three weeks after sowing.

## **Interculture**

Early control of weeds is essential for higher yield. Take up interculture of crop within 3 weeks of sowing. A second weeding may be taken up wherever necessary.

## **Parasite control**

Cuscuta parasite is a major problem in Koraput district and also to some extent in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. Use of clean seed and crop rotation will reduce the cuscuta parasite. Avoid growing niger in the same plot every year. Pre-plant incorporation of trifluralin @ 2.5 kg/ha or pre-emergence application of pendimethalin @ 1.5 kg/ha will control the parasite.

## **Harvesting**

Harvest the crop when the leaves and flower petals dry up and heads turn blackish. Keep the harvested bundles in stacks for 5-7 days to enable the seeds to reach full maturity. Thereafter dry the bundles and beat the heads with a stick to separate out the seeds.

## **IMPACT POINTS**

- i) Collect seeds from cuscuta free fields
- ii) Use 100 mesh sieve to separate cuscuta seeds from niger
- iii) Line sowing at 25-30 cm apart and early weed control
- iv) Moderate dose of fertilizer