

Mzee Musa: Now the land is ready – uhuh – do I now start planting?

Mr. Onesmus: Yes, it is time for planting, but you must always remember – you need to choose the right seeds if you want to get high returns on your harvest.

Mzee Musa: But maize is maize, I can plant anything, right?

Mr. Onesmus: There are different varieties of maize. If you want a good harvest, make sure you use high yielding varieties for better yields.

Mzee Musa: What kind of varieties are there?

Mr. Onesmus: Quite a few.

For hybrids, buy early maturing seeds from an approved agro-input store every growing season, such as *longe 10H* or *UH5354* (*Bazooka*).

Then for open pollinated varieties such as the early maturing *Longe 5* (*Nalongo*) or *Longe 4*, you can also get these from approved agro-input stores or use saved seeds from the previous harvest. But remember to change seed after 3 or 4 seasons.

Mzee Musa: Ok, I have the seeds – do I now plant?

Mr. Onesmus: Yes, you can plant now – however, For good establishment, plant your maize after two heavy rains at the beginning of the rain season. Do not delay planting as it will reduce yields.

Mzee Musa: But how much seed do I need?

Mr. Onesmus: You will need at least 10Kg of seed to plant 1 acre of land.

Mzee Musa: Do I just throw the seeds anywhere in the garden?

Mr. Onesmus: No. You will need to plant in lines at a spacing of 2½ ft between lines and 1 ft between plants. Place 1 seed per hole for optimum plant population

Mr. Onesmus: For your maize to grow well, you will need to maintain good soil health by using fertilizer from animal refuse and crop residue or fertilizer manufactured from industries

Mzee Musa: But when and how do I apply it?

Mr. Onesmus: Apply farmyard fertilizer from animal droppings or green manure from plant residue or both during land preparation. Alternatively, you can use manufactured fertilizer from industries.

Mzee Musa: And the fertilizer?

Mr. Onesmus: Apply 1 bottle-top full of DAP per hole and cover with little soil before placing the seed.
You will need at least 60kg of DAP to cover 1 acre.

Mzee Musa: Do I apply fertilizer just once and that's it?

Mr. Onesmus: No, you will need to apply again.
Apply 1 bottle-tops around the plant when the plant is knee high. You will need 60kg of urea to plant 1 acre. But is also advisable that you always consult with your agricultural extension worker about your soil nutrient needs before use of fertilizers. For best results however, use both organic and inorganic fertilizers in combination

Mr. Onesmus: Weeds compete for water, nutrients and space with your maize, so weeding is very important, especially during the first 4 weeks. Start weeding 18 to 20 days after panting. Then again 2 to 3 weeks later.

Mzee Musa: Is there any particular weed I should look out for?

Mr. Onesmus: Striga. It grows in close association with maize and can be identified by its dark green leaves and purple or white flower. The most basic and easiest way to get rid of this weed is by hand pulling striga plants early before they flower. *In this early stage, the Striga did not reach the roots of the maize plant yet, so damage can still be avoided. Removing Striga before it flowers also prevents it from spreading to the rest of the garden.*