PAPAYA FARMING

Papaya cultivation in India is a very profitable and relatively safe agriculture business. Papaya can be cultivated for vegetable, fruit, latex and dry leaves. Discover how to start papaya farming in India and make profit.

Papaya, also known as pawpaw is a delicious fruit rich in vitamin C. It is a tropical fruit and is highly valuable medicinal ingredient. Originally from Costa Rica and South Mexico, it is now widely cultivated worldwide. Globally, India leads the world in papaya production followed by Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Indonesia, Peru, China, Thailand and Philippines. Being a highly productive crop and easy to grow papaya is cultivated widely as a kitchen garden in India.

Papaya Tree Information

Papaya plant

Papaya belongs to the family Caricaceae. Botanically called as Carica papaya, it occurs in three sexes- male, females and hermaphrodites. Papaya plant grows straight up to 16 to 33 feet tall. They branch only when there is a damage at the apex of the stem; otherwise they are unbranched. The leaves are shaped like a fan and have a long stalk. The flowers are dimorphic and have 5 petals. The stamens of the male flowers are fused along with the petals whereas the female flowers have contorted petals with a superior ovary. The petals are attached loosely at the base of the flowers. They usually open at night and are pollinated by moths. The fruit varies in shape from oblong to spherical and it is orange colored when ripe.

Ideal Conditions for Papaya Cultivation in India

Being a tropical plant a tropical weather is most suited for papaya plantation. It can grow in almost all types of soils.

Climate for Papaya Cultivation

Being a tropical crop, papaya crops need a high level of humidity and temperature. It is sensitive to frost and heavy rains can cause damage. It can also grow in subtropical areas. Areas near the foothills have been found to be the perfect place for papaya cultivation in India. It can grow well at sea level and up to 600m of altitude from sea level. Above 600m, the fruits decrease in quality. Although the crop favors high levels of humidity for growth, it needs a warm and dry climate for ripening. The roots being shallow, papaya plant cannot withstand strong winds. Papaya can also be cultivated in greenhouse farming.

Soil for Papaya Plantation

Papaya can grow in a variety of soils. However, a rich, sandy loam is ideal for papaya plantation. It can also grow well in alluvial soil which is found along the deltas and river banks. However, it cannot grow in shallow soils or soils that do not let water drain off easily. A fertile, lime-free and well-drained soil is preferred for papaya cultivation.

pH Requirement in Papaya Farming

A neutral to near neutral soil can be used for papaya cultivation. The pH can be between 5.5 and 7.5.

Season for Papaya Plantation

Papaya is planted during monsoon, autumn and spring season. It is not planted during winter as the frost can cause damage or injury to the crop. In other words, they are planted during the months of June-July (monsoon), October-November (autumn) or February-March (summer). The first few things to be considered while planting papaya are rain, frost and hot air since all three cause injury to the plant.

Watering Papaya Plant

Water requirement for papaya depends on the environmental factors of the area like light, temperature, rainfall, wind, soil type, etc. It also differs with the age of the plant. A young papaya plant would need more moisture than the older trees. This is because older trees have slower vegetative growth. Hence the seedlings are irrigated once or twice a week while fruit bearing trees need irrigation once in every 15 days. Older trees need ample water. However, they cannot tolerate stagnated water or water logging since their roots are shallow and not deep. It results in 'wet feet' and lower fruit yield. That's why drip irrigation in papaya plantation is a good practice. During winter, papaya must be irrigated at an interval of 10-12 days while in summer they are watered once a week till the rains begin