



Crop details

Cardamom

Elettaria cardamomum

Family: Zingiberaceae

Categories

Spices & Condiments

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Quick stats

Family	Zingiberaceae
Typical harvest	0.8 t/ha
Varieties	3
Pests and diseases	5
Seasons	0

Crop profile

Growth habit	perennial
Days to harvest	365
Main uses	Green/ dried capsules for spice, beverages and flavouring.
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Grows in cool, humid, shaded high rainfall zones; niche pockets exist in East African highlands with forest shade or agroforestry.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	18 - 28 °C
Rainfall	1800 - 3000 mm/yr
Altitude	600 - 1800 m
Best pH	5.5 - 6.5
Soil type	Deep, well-drained forest loam with very high organic matter; thrives under shade.
Row spacing	200 cm
Plant spacing	200 cm
Planting depth	5 cm
Seed rate	kg/ha (check local recommendation)

Simple notes for farmers

**About the crop:** This crop is perennial; once planted it can keep producing for many years. Harvest typically starts about 365 days after planting.

**Main use:** Farmers mostly grow this crop for green/ dried capsules for spice, beverages and flavouring..

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

**Where it grows:** Grows in cool, humid, shaded high rainfall zones; niche pockets exist in East African highlands with forest shade or agroforestry.. Grouped under: Spices & Condiments.

**Best climate:** 18 - 28 °C; 1800 - 3000 mm/yr; up to about 1800 m a.s.l.

**Soil:** Best at pH 5.5 - 6.5; deep, well-drained forest loam with very high organic matter; thrives under shade..

### **Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)**

<b><u>Planting</u></b>	Use healthy suckers/seedlings from disease-free clumps. Plant at onset of rains under filtered shade. Incorporate lots of compost/mulch and keep beds raised on slopes.
<b><u>Transplanting</u></b>	Firm soil around clumps; provide temporary shade screens if needed.
<b><u>Irrigation</u></b>	Keep soil moist at flowering and capsule filling. Mulch thickly to conserve moisture.
<b><u>Fertigation</u></b>	Split small feeds through the season; more N early for tillering, K around flowering for capsule set and quality.
<b><u>Pest scouting</u></b>	Scout for capsule/shoot borers, thrips (bronzing), aphids and rhizome rots. Remove heavily infested shoots.
<b><u>Pruning and training</u></b>	Maintain shade at ~50–60%; remove dry/old pseudostems and keep clumps open.
<b><u>Harvest</u></b>	Pick capsules every 2–3 weeks when well formed but still green. Dry promptly to retain colour and aroma.
<b><u>Postharvest</u></b>	Wash lightly, blanching optional, then dry in solar/air dryers at low temperature until brittle; store airtight.

### **Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)**

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal before rains	0	NPK 15-15-15 + compost	150 kg/ha (plus 6–10 t/ha compost)	N: 22, P?O?: 22, K?O: 22	Blend lightly; avoid root injury.
2	Early topdress	60	CAN 26% N	120 kg/ha	N: 31, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply on moist soil; mulch back.
3	K boost at flowering	120	Sulfate of potash (SOP)	120 kg/ha	N: 0, P?O?: 0, K?O: 60	Improves capsule set and colour.

### **Nutrient requirements**

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	30	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress_early	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Topdress_early	10	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress_early	40	kg/ha
N	Flowering_fill	20	kg/ha
P?O?	Flowering_fill	0	kg/ha
K?O	Flowering_fill	40	kg/ha

## Field images



## Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Malabar-type selection	KE	730	Good aroma; suited to shade gardens.
Njallani/Green Gold type	TZ	730	High tillering, bold capsules where adapted.
Local small cardamom selection	UG	730	Locally adapted under agroforestry shade.

## Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 15-15-15 + compost	150	With heavy organic mulch.
Topdress	CAN 26% N	120	At 2 months after planting/flush.
Flowering/fill	SOP (K?SO?)	120	Supports capsule formation and quality.

## Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Shoot and capsule borer	pest		Remove infested shoots; maintain shade and sanitation; use recommended selective controls when needed.
Thrips	pest		Keep humidity with mulch/shade, encourage natural enemies; targeted sprays if heavy.
Aphids	pest		Control ants, spot treat; remove highly infested shoots.
Rhizome/soft rot (Pythium complex)	disease		Well-drained beds, clean planting material, remove affected clumps quickly.
Leaf blotch/anthracnose	disease		Improve airflow and shade balance; protectants during wet spells if required.

## Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Low-input shade gardens	0.35	0.2	0.5	Basic mulching and weeding; minimal fertilizer.
Managed plantations (rainfed)	0.7	0.4	1	Shade regulation, manuring and pest control.

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Intensive with irrigation	1.2	0.8	1.5	Good clonal material, steady moisture, careful harvest/drying.

### **Region suitability**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Forest-edge highlands with reliable rainfall	N/A
TZ	Southern & Northern highlands (shaded valleys)	N/A
UG	Moist highland agroforestry belts	N/A

Source: **FarmLens Ltd** - [farmlens.africa](http://farmlens.africa) and [app.farmlens.africa](http://app.farmlens.africa). Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya. This guide was generated from the FarmLens database.