FarmLens Ltd

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Crop details

Basil (sweet basil)

Ocimum basilicum

Family: Lamiaceae

Categories

Spices & Condiments

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Quick stats

Family	Lamiaceae
Typical harvest	16.0 t/ha
Varieties	3
Pests and diseases	4
Seasons	0

Crop profile

Growth habit	annual
Days to harvest	90
Main uses	Fresh and dried leaves for culinary use, herbal teas and essential oils.
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Native to tropical regions; widely grown in warm, frost-free areas around the world.

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	18 - 30 °C
Rainfall	700 - 1200 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 2000 m
Best pH	6 - 7
Soil type	Light to medium-textured, well-drained soils rich in organic matter.
Row spacing	40 cm
Plant spacing	25 cm
Planting depth	1 cm
Seed rate	4 kg/ha
Nursery days	25

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is annual; it grows and is harvested in one season. Harvest typically starts about 90 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for fresh and dried leaves for culinary use, herbal teas and essential oils..

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

Where it grows: Native to tropical regions; widely grown in warm, frost-free areas around the world.. Grouped under: Spices & Condiments.

Best climate: 18 - 30 °C; 700 - 1200 mm/yr; up to about 2000 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6 - 7; light to medium-textured, well-drained soils rich in organic matter..

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Sow seeds in a fine nursery or seedling trays and transplant at 4–6 true leaves, or direct seed on well-prepared beds after danger of frost.
Transplanting	Harden seedlings for about a week before transplanting in the late afternoon to reduce stress.
Irrigation	Maintain even moisture, especially during establishment and after each cutting; avoid overwatering.
Fertigation	Under drip, use frequent small doses of N and K to encourage leafy growth and fast regrowth after harvest.
Pest scouting	Scout weekly for leaf spots, downy mildew, aphids and whiteflies; remove severely affected plants and improve airflow.
Pruning and training	Pinch off flower buds early and harvest by cutting 10–15 cm above ground to encourage branching and tillering.
Harvest	First harvest 6–8 weeks after planting/ transplanting when plants are 20–30 cm tall. Harvest in the cool of the day to preserve aroma.
Postharvest	Handle gently to avoid bruising; bunch or pack in cool, shaded conditions. For drying, use shade or low-temperature drying to preserve colour and aroma.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal at planting	0	NPK 17-17-17 + compost	80 kg/ha (plus 3–5 t/ha compost)	N: 14, P?O?: 14, K?O: 14	Incorporate into topsoil before sowing or transplanting.
2	Vegetative topdress	25	CAN 26% N	80 kg/ha	N: 21, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Side-dress on moist soil along rows, then water in.
3	Post-cut regrowth feed	55	NPK 20-10-10 or similar	60 kg/ha after first major cut	N: 12, P?O?: 6, K?O: 6	Apply immediately after cutting, then irrigate to support regrowth.

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	25	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	25	kg/ha
N	Vegetative_boost	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Vegetative_boost	10	kg/ha
K?O	Vegetative_boost	20	kg/ha
N	After_cut	20	kg/ha
P?O?	After_cut	0	kg/ha

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
K?O	After_cut	20	kg/ha

Field images

Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Genovese-type basil	KE	80	Large leaves, strong aroma, preferred for fresh market.
Fine-leaf basil selection	TZ	75	Smaller leaves, intense flavour, suited to drying.
Local basil (African basil) type	UG	90	Hardy local type used for tea and medicinal purposes.

Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Basal	NPK 17-17-17 + compost	80	Apply with 3–5 t/ha compost or well-rotted manure before planting.
Vegetative	CAN 26% N	80	About 3–4 weeks after emergence or transplanting.
After cut	NPK 20-10-10	60	Apply after main harvests in intensively managed herb systems.

Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Downy mildew	disease		Improve spacing and airflow, avoid overhead irrigation in late day, remove infected plants promptly.
Leaf spot (Alternaria / Cercospora complex)	disease		Use clean seed, rotate with non-hosts, avoid prolonged leaf wetness.
Aphids	pest		Encourage natural enemies, use water jets or soft soaps where appropriate, avoid excessive N.
Whiteflies	pest		Use yellow sticky traps, remove heavily infested plants, encourage beneficial insects.

Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes

Low-input smallholder (fresh)	8	5	10	Rainfed beds with basic manuring and 2–3 cuttings.
Managed beds with irrigation	15	10	20	Regular weeding, watering and modest NPK; 3–4 cuttings.
Intensive irrigated herb production	25	15	30	High planting density, fertigation and frequent harvests for fresh market.

Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Central & Rift highlands; irrigated peri-urban zones	N/A
TZ	Northern and southern highlands; irrigated plains	N/A
UG	Mid-altitude belts near urban markets	N/A