FarmLens Ltd

Website: farmlens.africa | App: app.farmlens.africa | Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya

Crop details

Kenaf

Hibiscus cannabinus

Family: Malvaceae

Categories

Oil & Industrial

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Quick stats

Family	Malvaceae
Typical harvest	9.0 t/ha
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Crop profile

Growth habit	annual
Days to harvest	120-180
Main uses	Fiber; biomass
Pollination	insect
Origin and where it grows	Africa/Asia tropics

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	24 - 32 °C
Rainfall	700 - 1200 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 1600 m
Best pH	6 - 7
Soil type	Fertile loam
Row spacing	60 cm
Plant spacing	20 cm
Planting depth	2 cm
Seed rate	15 kg/ha

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is annual; it grows and is harvested in one season. Harvest typically starts about 120-180 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for fiber; biomass.

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

Where it grows: Africa/Asia tropics. Grouped under: Oil & Industrial.

Best climate: 24 - 32 °C; 700 - 1200 mm/yr; up to about 1600 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6 - 7; fertile loam.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Direct-seed on a fine, firm seedbed at onset of rains. Thin to spacing at 2–3 weeks. Keep weed-free during early growth.
Transplanting	Not commonly transplanted; direct seeding preferred.
Irrigation	Maintain adequate moisture during first 6–8 weeks and at rapid stem elongation.
Fertigation	If irrigated, split N and K into small doses; avoid excess late N to reduce lodging.
Pest scouting	Scout for defoliators, whiteflies/aphids (virus risk), and stem rots; remove diseased plants.
Pruning and training	Not required; avoid lodging via balanced nutrition and density.
Harvest	Harvest for fiber at early pod set when stems are mature but not woody; rett stems and strip bast fiber.
Postharvest	Ret evenly (water or dew); wash and dry fiber under shade; store dry and aerated.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 15-15-15	80 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Band or broadcast and incorporate
2	Topdress	35	Urea	60 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Apply on moist soil; avoid leaf contact
3	Topdress 2 (optional)	50	Urea (light)	30 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Only if crop vigor is low

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	20	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Topdress	30	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress	20	kg/ha
N	Late	20	kg/ha

Field images

Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Local Kenaf	KE	150	Fiber yield
Local fiber type	KE	120	Tall; good bast yield
Dual-purpose (fiber/biomass)	TZ	110	Moderate height; good biomass

Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Basal	NPK 15-15-15	80	
Basal	NPK 17-17-17	100	At sowing
Topdress	Urea 46% N or CAN 26% N	60	~30 DAP
Topdress	Urea (optional)	30	~50 DAP if needed

Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Stem borers	pest	Bored stems	Rotation; timely harvest
Hairy caterpillar/defoliators	pest	Leaf stripping; skeletonization	Early scouting; hand-pick or targeted sprays; conserve natural enemies
Aphids & whiteflies	pest	Honeydew/sooty mold; virus transmission	Monitor; control ants; selective insecticides if thresholds exceeded
Stem/foot rot (Fusarium/Pythium)	disease	Stem base rot; wilting	Rotation; well-drained fields; avoid injury; rogue plants
Leaf spots (Cercospora/Alternaria)	disease	Spots; premature defoliation	Spacing; sanitation; protectants if severe

Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes
rainfed	10	6	15	Stem biomass (fresh)
rainfed smallholder	2	1.2	3	Bast fiber
biomass (stems, fresh)	15	10	25	Whole stem fresh biomass

Season calendars

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Humid lowlands	Mar–Apr	Jul–Oct
KE	Low to mid-altitudes (long rains)	Mar–Apr	Jul–Sep

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Low to mid-altitudes (short rains)	Oct–Nov	Feb–Mar
UG	Eastern/Central (1st rains)	Mar–Apr	Jul–Aug
UG	Eastern/Central (2nd rains)	Aug–Sep	Dec–Jan
TZ	Northern unimodal	Nov–Dec	Mar–May

Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Coastal; Lower Eastern; Lake Basin; mid-altitude warm zones	High
KE	Cool highlands >1800 m	Low
KE	Humid lowlands	High
KE	Poorly drained wetlands	Low
TZ	Coast; Morogoro; warm valleys	High
UG	Eastern & Central warm sub-humid	High

Source: **FarmLens Ltd** - farmlens.africa and app.farmlens.africa. Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya. This guide was generated from the FarmLens database.