FarmLens Ltd

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

Crop details

Swiss chard (silverbeet)

Beta vulgaris var. cicla

Family: Amaranthaceae

Categories

Vegetables

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Quick stats

Family	Amaranthaceae
Typical harvest	12.0 t/ha
Varieties	1
Pests and diseases	4
Seasons	1

Crop profile

Growth habit	biennial
Days to harvest	60-120
Main uses	Leafy vegetable
Pollination	wind
Origin and where it grows	Temperate; widely grown

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	12 - 22 °C
Rainfall	500 - 800 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 2600 m
Best pH	6.2 - 7
Soil type	Fertile loam
Row spacing	40 cm
Plant spacing	30 cm
Planting depth	1.5 cm
Seed rate	8 kg/ha

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is biennial; it usually needs two seasons to complete its cycle. Harvest typically starts about 60-120 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for leafy vegetable.

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

Where it grows: Temperate; widely grown. Grouped under: Vegetables.

Best climate: 12 - 22 °C; 500 - 800 mm/yr; up to about 2600 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6.2 - 7; fertile loam.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

Planting	Direct seed in fine, firm seedbed or transplant sturdy plugs; thin for uniform plants.
Transplanting	Transplant at 3–4 true leaves if using plugs; avoid root damage.
Irrigation	Maintain consistent moisture; shallow frequent irrigation in light soils.
Fertigation	Split light N through early-mid growth; avoid excess late N to limit nitrate buildup.
Pest scouting	Scout for leaf miners and aphids; remove affected leaves; rotate fields.
Pruning and training	Not required.
Harvest	Harvest outer leaves regularly; avoid damaging growing point.
Postharvest	Hydro-cool or shade-cool; bundle loosely; store cool and humid; highly perishable at ambient.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 17-17-17	80 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Band or broadcast and incorporate lightly
2	Topdress	30	CAN 26% N	80 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Irrigate after application

Nutrient requirements

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

Field images

Varieties

Name	Country	Maturity (days)	Traits
Fordhook Giant	KE	70	Large leaves

Fertilizer recommendations

Stage	Product	Rate	Notes
Basal	NPK 17-17-17	80	
Topdress	CAN 26% N	80	Split if soils are light

Pests and diseases

Name	Type	Symptoms	Management
Leaf miner	pest	Mines in leaves	Remove mined leaves; rotate
Aphids	pest	Leaf curling; honeydew	Conserve predators; control ants; soft insecticides if needed
Leaf spots	disease	Spots on leaves reducing area	Rotation; protectants as needed; sanitation
Downy mildew	disease	Yellowing with downy growth	Airflow; resistant types; timely fungicide

Yields

System	Typical	Min	Max	Notes
open-field	12	8	20	

Season calendars

Country	Region	Planting	Harvest
KE	Highlands	Feb–Apr	Apr–Aug

Region suitability

Country	Region	Suitability
KE	Highlands	High
TZ	Northern highlands	High
UG	Lake Victoria basin	High