

FarmLens Ltd

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Crop details

Lettuce

Lactuca sativa

Family: Asteraceae

Categories

Vegetables

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Quick stats

Family	Asteraceae
Typical harvest	15.0 t/ha
Varieties	4
Pests and diseases	6
Seasons	4

Crop profile

Growth habit	annual
Days to harvest	45–80
Main uses	Leafy vegetable (head and loose-leaf types)
Pollination	self
Origin and where it grows	Temperate crop; widely grown in East African highlands and cool seasons

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	12 - 20 °C
Rainfall	400 - 700 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 2600 m
Best pH	6.2 - 7
Soil type	Fertile, well-drained loam; high organic matter
Row spacing	40 cm
Plant spacing	30 cm
Planting depth	1 cm
Seed rate	2 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 45–80 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for leafy vegetable (head and loose-leaf types).

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

Where it grows: Temperate crop; widely grown in East African highlands and cool seasons. Grouped under: Vegetables.

Best climate: 12 - 20 °C; 400 - 700 mm/yr; up to about 2600 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6.2 - 7; fertile, well-drained loam; high organic matter.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

<u>Planting</u>	Prefer cool season. Use nursery or plug trays; transplant at 4–5 true leaves. Maintain even moisture.
<u>Transplanting</u>	Transplant late afternoon; avoid burying crown; firm soil around roots.
<u>Irrigation</u>	Shallow roots: frequent light irrigations; avoid wetting leaves late day to reduce disease.
<u>Fertigation</u>	Low-to-moderate N in small doses; include Ca/Mg if water/soil is low.
<u>Pest scouting</u>	Scout for aphids, leaf miners, cutworms, downy mildew, and tipburn (physiological).
<u>Pruning and training</u>	Not required; remove outer damaged leaves.
<u>Harvest</u>	Harvest at full size before bolting; cool immediately to maintain crispness.
<u>Postharvest</u>	Hydrocool/shade-cool; store 0–2 °C (leaf types) or 1–4 °C (heads) at high RH; avoid crushing.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal at planting	0	NPK 17-17-17	60 kg/ha	N: 10, P ₂ O ₅ : 10, K ₂ O: 10	Band lightly 5 cm from row; incorporate
2	Topdress 1 (veg)	20	CAN 26% N	60 kg/ha	N: 16, P ₂ O ₅ : N/A, K ₂ O: N/A	Irrigate after application
3	Topdress 2 (pre-heading)	35	KNO ₃ (optional)	30 kg/ha	N: N/A, P ₂ O ₅ : N/A, K ₂ O: 15	Boost K; improves quality and shelf life
4	Micronutrient foliar (opt.)	25	Trace mix (Ca, Mg, B) as label	0 —	N: N/A, P ₂ O ₅ : N/A, K ₂ O: N/A	Helps reduce tipburn under rapid growth

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P ₂ O ₅	Basal	25	kg/ha
K ₂ O	Basal	30	kg/ha
N	Vegetative	30	kg/ha
K ₂ O	Vegetative	20	kg/ha
N	Heading	20	kg/ha
K ₂ O	Heading	20	kg/ha

Field images



Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Great Lakes	KE	55	Crisphead
Great Lakes (crisphead)	KE	55	Crisp heads; cool-season
Romaine (cos types)	KE	60	Upright heads; heat-tolerant selections
Butterhead/Bibb	UG	55	Tender leaves; cool conditions

Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 17-17-17	60	Incorporate before transplant
Topdress	CAN 26% N	60	Apply in moist soil; split if needed
Pre-heading	Potassium nitrate (KNO ₃)	30	Optional quality boost

Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Aphids	pest	Curling leaves; honeydew/sooty mold	Conserve predators; soft insecticides; control ants
Leaf miners	pest	Mines in leaves	Remove mined leaves; rotate chemistries; traps
Cutworms	pest	Cut seedlings at base	Baits; evening scouting; field sanitation
Downy mildew	disease	Yellow patches; downy growth below	Airflow; resistant types; protectants
Bottom rot/soft rot	disease	Base/butt rot in wet soils	Drainage; rotation; avoid overhead late
Tipburn (physiol.)	disorder	Brown leaf margins in heads	Even moisture; adequate Ca; moderate growth rate

Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
open-field	12	8	20	Depends on type and season
protected/irrigated	18	12	25	Good fertility & temperature control

Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	Highlands	Feb–Apr	Apr–Jun
KE	Highlands (cool season)	Jul–Aug	Sep–Nov
UG	Highlands & cool valleys	Mar–Apr	May–Jul
TZ	Northern highlands	Jun–Jul	Aug–Oct

Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Highlands	High
KE	Highlands & cool mid-altitudes	High
KE	Hot lowlands (>28 °C daytime)	Low
KE	Waterlogged sites	Low
TZ	Northern highlands	High
UG	Highland zones	High

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