

## FarmLens Ltd

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



Crop details

### Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere)

*Amaranthus spp.*

Family: Amaranthaceae

Categories

Vegetables

Generated: 2025-12-13 03:51

#### Quick stats

<u>Family</u>	Amaranthaceae
<u>Typical harvest</u>	16.0 t/ha
<u>Varieties</u>	3
<u>Pests and diseases</u>	6
<u>Seasons</u>	0

#### Crop profile

<u>Growth habit</u>	annual
<u>Days to harvest</u>	45
<u>Main uses</u>	Young tender leaves cooked as vegetables, mixed with other greens, stews and sauces; sometimes grown for both leaf and grain.
<u>Pollination</u>	wind
<u>Origin and where it grows</u>	Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) are common leafy vegetables around homesteads, markets and irrigation schemes across East Africa.

#### Weather, soil and spacing

<u>Best temperature</u>	20 - 30 °C
<u>Rainfall</u>	500 - 800 mm/yr
<u>Altitude</u>	0 - 2000 m
<u>Best pH</u>	6 - 7
<u>Soil type</u>	Well-drained loam or sandy loam with plenty of compost or manure so Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) can grow fast and tender.
<u>Row spacing</u>	30 cm
<u>Plant spacing</u>	10 cm
<u>Planting depth</u>	1 cm
<u>Seed rate</u>	5 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 45 days after planting.

**Main use:** Farmers mostly grow this crop for young tender leaves cooked as vegetables, mixed with other greens, stews and sauces; sometimes grown for both leaf and grain..

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

**Where it grows:** Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) are common leafy vegetables around homesteads, markets and irrigation schemes across East Africa.. Grouped under: Vegetables.

**Best climate:** 20 - 30 °C; 500 - 800 mm/yr; up to about 2000 m a.s.l.

**Soil:** Best at pH 6 - 7; well-drained loam or sandy loam with plenty of compost or manure so amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) can grow fast and tender..

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

<b><u>Planting</u></b>	Prepare a fine, level seedbed. Sow Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) seed in shallow rows or lightly broadcast, cover very lightly with soil and keep moist until emergence. Thin crowded seedlings so each plant has space to form many leaves.
<b><u>Transplanting</u></b>	Where seedlings are raised in a small nursery, transplant when 8–10 cm tall. Handle gently and water immediately after transplanting.
<b><u>Irrigation</u></b>	Keep soil moist, especially in the first weeks and after each picking so new leaves grow quickly. Amaranth tolerates short dry periods but quality is best with steady moisture.
<b><u>Fertigation</u></b>	Under drip, apply small regular amounts of nitrogen-rich fertilizer together with some potassium. Too much nitrogen close to harvest can make leaves very soft and watery.
<b><u>Pest scouting</u></b>	Check Amaranth (mchicha/terere) weekly for leaf-eating caterpillars, aphids and leaf spots. Remove severely damaged leaves and act early when damage is still small.
<b><u>Pruning and training</u></b>	No pruning needed. Begin cutting or pinching the top to encourage side shoots, then keep harvesting leaves without removing the whole plant.
<b><u>Harvest</u></b>	Start harvesting tender leaves and soft shoot tips when plants are about 20–25 cm tall. Cut in the cool morning or late afternoon for best freshness.
<b><u>Postharvest</u></b>	Keep harvested Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere) in shade, avoid crushing and sprinkle lightly with clean water if wilting. Transport quickly to market in ventilated crates or perforated bags.

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

#	<b><u>Stage</u></b>	<b><u>DAP</u></b>	<b><u>Product</u></b>	<b><u>Rate</u></b>	<b><u>Targets (kg/ha)</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>
1	Basal before sowing	0	NPK 17-17-17 or 15-15-15	120 kg/ha	N: 20, P?O?: 20, K?O: 20	Broadcast lightly on the seedbed and mix with the topsoil before sowing Amaranth (mchicha/terere).
2	Early topdress	14	CAN 26% N	60 kg/ha	N: 16, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply between rows on moist soil and water in.
3	Topdress after first cut	30	Urea 46% N or CAN	40 kg/ha	N: 18, P?O?: 0, K?O: 0	Apply lightly after cutting to encourage fresh leaf flush.

### **Nutrient requirements**

<b><u>Nutrient</u></b>	<b><u>Stage</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Unit</u></b>
N	Basal	30	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	40	kg/ha

<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Unit</u>
K <sub>2</sub> O	Basal	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress_early	25	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Topdress_early	0	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Topdress_early	20	kg/ha
N	Topdress_after_cut	20	kg/ha
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Topdress_after_cut	0	kg/ha
K <sub>2</sub> O	Topdress_after_cut	20	kg/ha

### Field images



### Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Local green Amaranth (mchicha)	KE	30	Fast-growing, tender leaves and common in markets.
Red-stemmed Amaranth	KE	30	Red or purple veins and stems; attractive bunches.
Improved leaf Amaranth	TZ	35	Uniform plants, high yield and good regrowth after cutting.

### Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 17-17-17 or 15-15-15	120	Balanced base for early leaf growth of Amaranth (mchicha/terere).
Topdress (N source)	CAN 26% N or urea	60	Apply once or twice depending on crop colour and vigour.
Organic	Well-rotted manure or compost	6000	Apply before planting to improve soil organic matter and moisture holding.

### Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Leaf-eating caterpillars	pest		Handpick on small plots, encourage natural enemies and use Bt or other recommended insecticides based on scouting.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Aphids	pest		Encourage natural enemies, avoid excess nitrogen and use selective insecticides or biopesticides when infestations are heavy.
Leaf miners	pest		Remove badly infested leaves and use recommended insecticides against adult flies if needed.
Flea beetles	pest		Prepare land early, reduce weeds and, if necessary, use insecticides when seedlings are small and damage is severe.
Leaf spots and blights	disease		Avoid overhead irrigation late in the day, improve airflow, rotate crops and remove heavily diseased leaves.
Root rots	disease		Plant on raised beds or well-drained soils and avoid over-irrigation.

## Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Backyard / low-input Amaranth leaves (mchicha/terere)	8	5	12	Some manure, little fertilizer and irregular picking.
Open-field Amaranth leaves, improved management	15	10	20	Good seed, proper spacing, recommended fertilizer and regular harvesting.
Irrigated or high-input Amaranth leaves	25	15	35	Frequent harvests under irrigation or wet conditions with fertigation and tight pest management.

## Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Peri-urban and rural vegetable-growing areas	N/A
KE	Semi-arid areas with kitchen gardens and some water	N/A
TZ	Urban and irrigated Amaranth (mchicha) belts	N/A
UG	Smallholder vegetable zones around towns	N/A

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