

CORETE POTAGERE
TEGE

***Corchorus olitorius* L.**



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Recommended Cultural Practices

Climate and Soil Requirements

Tege performs best under warm and humid conditions and is therefore often grown on low-lying river banks to allow frequent watering. The crop can even be grown in swampy regions as long as the land is not under water. Well-drained soils with abundant water are ideal and most farmers plant the crop on raised beds of about 1.50 m wide x 10 m long. The average monocropped plot is about 300 m². During the rainy season, farmers usually grow Tege amongst other food crops. Tege does not tolerate cold weather and extended periods of drought will kill the crop.

Seeds and Sowing

Seeds should be collected from yellow or brown pods and left to dry on a sheet. Seeds should not be sown within four months to avoid dormancy of the seeds. When dormancy remains a problem, heat treatment should be done by placing a cloth bag with seeds in hot, simmering water for 5 - 10 seconds after which the bag should be placed in cold water for 5-15 minutes. The seeds should then be placed on a dry cloth and allowed to dry in the shade for one day. Treated seeds should be sown immediately since they cannot be stored. This method gives the most uniform seedlings.

Seeds can be broadcast in seedbeds or sown along rows 15-20 cm wide. Closely planted

seedlings are susceptible to diseases. Strong plants can be obtained when the seedlings are thinned to 1-2 cm spacing. The seedlings should be transplanted when they are about 7-10 cm tall, as older plants will not settle well. Spacing for tall varieties with few side shoots, like Ewondo or Géant de Bertoua, is 10 cm in the row by 30-50 cm between rows. Alternate plants can be pulled out during the first harvest, thus leaving a space within the rows of 20 cm. Broad varieties with many side shoots require a spacing of 30 x 50 cm and these varieties often grow spontaneously during the rainy season or are sown directly.

Manure and fertilizers

Tege responds well to manure and it is recommended to apply 1.5 - 2 kg of dried chicken manure (or well-decomposed cattle or goat manure) plus 100 gram ash per m² bed. Alternatively when manure is not available, 15-15-15 compound fertilizers at a rate of 25 gram per m² can be used.

Crop Management

It is recommended to plant the crop on beds at an interval of 2 weeks to spread the marketing period and reduce the risk of no sale during periods of oversupply. Plants can be topped to give stronger side shoots. Frequent irrigation is needed for a good leaf yield. Pests and diseases are not usually problematic for Tege. If these problems become serious, consult a vegetable crop protection specialist.

Harvesting and Post-Harvest

Subsistence farmers usually harvest fresh shoots and allow new side shoots to develop. The first harvest of market gardeners consists of thinned plants with their roots attached. The next harvest will be tops picked at approximately 15 cm above ground. New side shoots will develop and harvest can be repeated 3 or 4 times, depending on soil fertility and irrigation. More frequent and intense plucking of leaves tends to prolong the vegetative phase. Tege perishes quickly after harvest, especially when left in the sun. The produce should be wrapped in a wet cloth, leaving plenty of room for aeration. Ensure that the cloth remains moist. Water may be sprinkled on heaps of produce but not too often since this will stimulate rotting.



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