

Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*)

Adapted to a wide range of soil types, Cowpea is an excellent soil conditioner and has a high nutritional value. Cowpea is easily established and drought tolerant, requiring rainfall between 750-1100 mm.

Advantages

- improves soil fertility
- easy establishment
- very high nutritional value
- highly palatable
- drought tolerant
- high seed production
- high dry matter production in a short time frame

Limitations

- susceptible to pest and diseases
- susceptible to frost
- requires warm temperatures 25-35°C to grow

Seeding rate

15 – 20 kg/ha

Rainfall

750-1100 mm

Planting

Adapted from sands to well drained clays. Plant when soil temperatures are 18° C and rising. Cowpea will not persist under extended flooding or saline conditions. Germination is fast, provided there is warm temperatures and good soil moisture.

General fertilisation guide

Will respond to applications of phosphorus, potassium, and sulphur. On poorer soil types, molybdenum may be required.

Growing management

Light grazing is recommended to ensure plant regrowth. Cowpea acts as a host to a variety of pests and diseases including Phaseolus. Stem rot can also be an issue.

Fodder quality

Very high fodder quality and palatability. Crude protein values can be 14-21% in green forage with digestibility ≥80%.

