HOW TO HARVEST AMARANTH LEAVES AND GRAIN

Drying and seed processing

Place the panicles on a clean polythene paper or canvas. Thresh the panicles by hitting lightly with a stick. Winnow and dry the seeds under the sun to the required moisture content (how) to avoid microbial growth.

**Manual amaranth thresher**

During grain/seed processing ensure that seeds are not contaminated with sand or soil particles to avoid rejection by processors. Put dried seed in gunny bags and store in a cool dry place.

**Store in dry gunny bags**

**Compiled by:**
Fatuma Omari, E. N. Njiru, M. Karoki, D. Mutisya and R. Mokua

**For More Information contact**
Centre Director, KALRO-Katumani
P.O. BO ,
Email.

Website: www.kalro.org/asal-aprp; kalropoultry@gmail.com

Editorial and publication coordinated by:
KALRO Knowledge & Information Unit

KALRO Information brochure series 2017/07
How to harvest amaranth leaves and grain

Grain amaranth is a dual purpose crop grown for both vegetables and grain. Amaranth leaves are used as vegetables in many parts of Africa and provide valuable nutrition to many people. Vegetable amaranth grows naturally in Kenya and is widely grown and consumed all over the country. The main areas of production are western Kenya, coast, Rift valley and it is also picking up in eastern Kenya. Although relatively new in the country, grain amaranth has a great potential as a nutritious food and for commercial production. Amaranth grains are very tiny and require a lot of care to avoid contamination during harvesting and processing. This makes grain amaranth a labour intensity crop.

Leaf harvesting

Amaranth leaves are harvested by thinning and clipping. During thinning, the whole plant is uprooted. Thinning starts 2-3 weeks after germination or when the plant has 6-8 fully grown leaves. Harvesting can also be by clipping the crop is done at regular intervals. Clipping may commence 3-4 weeks after germination. The tender leaves are clipped once a week until the onset of flowering or heading.

Grain harvesting

Amaranth grains shutters easily, it is therefore recommended that the crop is harvested as soon as the color of the panicle/heads turns from green to golden and seeds drop on light shaking of the plant.

To harvest, cut off the heads and insert in a container without holes such a gunny bag or a bucket. Cut off the panicle with a knife or panga so that it detaches from the stem and falls into the container. The panicles may also be detached form the plant by breaking with hands. This ensures less seeds are lost during harvesting.