Control weeds in bulb onions for high yields

Yields:
Grass Mulch – 4.63 tons/ha
Black polythene - 5.2 tons/ha
Weeding every 2 weeks- 4.69 tons/ha.

The yield benefits with mulches are more than hand weeding and surpass the costs incurred in acquiring and applying the mulches.

Use black polythene mulch to lower labour costs

High quality onions yields
Termite infestation on the mulch may necessitate addition of the grass one month later.

ii) Black polythene mulch
A black polythene sheet is laid on the soil surface before onion transplanting. Planting holes are made on the polythene sheet at intervals of 10 x 20cm. This is done in the entire plot and the sheet remains in place until the crop matures.

Organic and inorganic mulches
Different mulch types control weeds by suppressing their growth.

i) Grass mulch
The soil surface around the onion stems is covered with 5 cm deep dry grass two weeks after transplanting and left in place through out the season.

Hand weeding
Although strenuous and labour intensive, hand weeding has continued to be the major weed control method used by most onion growers in Kenya.

Herbicides
Use of pre-emergence herbicides applied at two weeks after transplanting controls weeds throughout the onion growing period.