

## Grow Desmodium for Seed

### WHY DESMODIUM SEED?

- Farmers should plant desmodium because it is a good source of feed for cows, and it increases soil fertility.
- In areas where striga weed is a problem, desmodium planted between the rows of maize will stop striga growing and farmers get higher yields. desmodium is not liked by the maize stalkborer, it "pushes" the stalkborer away from maize.
- Desmodium seed is hard to obtain and is expensive but can be grown by local farmers. farmer could produce seed and supply 20 neighbouring farmers.
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### HOW TO GROW IT

- You need 2 kg of seed per acre.
- Prepare a fine seedbed.
- Make furrows 1 1/2 feet apart and 1 inch
- Mix seed with triple superphosphate fertilizer (2 kg seed with 1 bag of TSP per acre).
- Sow seed mixed with phosphate into the furrows and cover them with a little soil.

### MANAGEMENT

- Hand weed your plot regularly, at least 6 weeks after planting and when weeds appear.
- Spray desmodium against aphids and bollworms at flowering. Use Dimethoate at 2-week intervals if needed.

## WHEN AND HOW TO HARVEST

- Harvest the seed weekly when the pods turn hard stripping the ripe pods.
- Sun-dry and thresh the pods on a hard surface using a stone.
- Winnow to get clean seed.
- Store the seeds in a dry place to avoid rotting.
- An acre produces 30 to 60 kg of seed, which can sell for up to 1000 Ksh per kg.



Can dry and thresh the pods on a hard



## OTHER BENEFITS FROM DESMODIUM

- Surplus green feed can be conserved as hay for use during the dry season.
- 3 to 6 kg of green material can be used instead of 1 to 2 kg of dairy meal.
- Desmodium intercropped with maize will:
  - Stop striga weed growing.
  - Reduce maize stalkborer damage.
  - Provide nitrogen to the crop.
  - Provide fodder for cows.
  - Prevent erosion.

## HOW DOES DESMODIUM REDUCE STALKBORER DAMAGE?

- The stalkborer does not like desmodium.
- Desmodium intercropped with maize will "push" the stalkborer away so that less damage will be found in the maize.
- If Napier is planted around maize as well as intercropped with desmodium, then the female stalkborer is "pushed" away by the desmodium and "pulled" to the Napier where 9 out of 10 stalkborers will die in the sticky glue in the Napier stem.
- Research shows much better yields of maize if this "push-pull" method is used.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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