

Chapter Twenty

Vegetable Production

Introduction:

- An edible plant is a plant that can be eaten.
- Vegetables are edible plants that are grown for their leaves, roots, seeds and fruits.
- Examples are pepper, cabbage, onion, lettuce and okro.
- We eat the leaves of vegetables such as cocoyam and cabbage.
- We eat the fruits of vegetables such as okro and pepper.
- Lastly, the roots of vegetables such as carrot and cocoyam are eaten.
- This is why vegetables are grown for their leaves, roots, fruits and so on.

The importance of vegetables:

- We eat them as food so as to be healthy.
- They add taste to our food.
- People grow vegetables as their work.

Types or groups of vegetables:

- There are different types of vegetables, and some of these are:
 - (a) Exotic vegetables.
 - (b) Local vegetables.
 - (c) Annual vegetables.
 - (d) Biennial vegetables.
 - (e) Perennial vegetables.

Exotic Vegetables:

- These are those vegetables, which come from foreign countries.
- Examples are carrot, lettuce and cabbage.

Local vegetables:

- These are those vegetables, which come from our own country.
- Examples are pepper, garden eggs and cocoyam leaves.

Annual Vegetables:

- These are those vegetables which grow within a year, or last for a year.
- Examples of such vegetables are lettuce, garden egg, tomato and okro.

Biennial Vegetables:

- These vegetables last for or take about two years to grow.
- Examples are cabbage and carrot.

Perennial Vegetables:

- These are those vegetables which can last for many years, or can grow for a long time.
- An example is the cocoyam.

Factors which affect the production of vegetables:

- These factors are:
 - (i) Climate factors.
 - (ii) Soil factors.
- The climate factors include temperature and rainfall.

The Nursery:

- This is a place where seedlings are raised from seeds, before they are transplanted.

Types of nursery:

- There are two types of nursery and these are:
 - (a) The nursery bed.
 - (b) The nursery box.

The nursery bed (Seed bed):

- This is made on a small patch of loamy or fertile soil.
- It is usually 1m × 1m in size.
- The soil in the small patch is made loose, and organic manure is then added.

Nursery box (seed box):

- This is a small box made of wood or plastic in which seeds are sown.
- There are holes around or under it, so as to allow any extra water in the soil it contains to drain away.

Drilling and broadcasting:

- These are two ways in which seeds are sown.
- In the drilling method, small trenches are made in the soil.
- The seeds are placed into these trenches, covered with fine soil and watered.
- In the broadcasting method, the seeds are evenly spread on top of the soil.
- They are then covered with a fine layer of soil and watered.

Vegetable seed propagation:

- The method used in the propagation or the sowing of vegetable seeds, depends on the size of the seed. -

Some common methods used in the sowing of vegetable seeds are:

- (1) Sowing the seeds on the nursery beds, before transplanting them later on.
 - Small seeds are sown by this method.
- (2) Sowing the seeds in seed boxes, before they are transplanted onto the farmland.
 - Also it is small seeds which are sown by this means.
- (3) Planting at stake or sowing the seeds directly on the farmland.
 - Seeds which are large in size are propagated by this means.

Sources of vegetable seeds:

- You must always plant good vegetable seeds.
- Such seed can be had from a seed company.
- If we plant good seeds, then we shall get good and healthy vegetable crops.

Caring for the nursery:

Watering of the seedlings:

- The seedlings must be watered daily using water can. -
- The watering must be done during the early morning, as well as the evening.

Shading:

- Very young seedlings must be provided with shade, so that they do not get too much sunlight.