

Chapter Twenty Four

Vegetable Production

Vegetables:

Vegetables are edible plants that are grown for their leaves, roots, seeds and fruits. Examples are pepper, cabbage, onion, lettuce and okro.

The importance of vegetables:

- We eat them as food so as to be healthy.
- They add taste to the food we eat.
- Some people grow vegetables as their work or employment.
- We can export vegetables to get foreign exchange.

Types of vegetables:

- There are different types of vegetables, and some of these are:
 - (i) Exotic vegetables.
 - (ii) Local vegetables.
 - (iii) Annual vegetables.
 - (iv) Biennial vegetables.
 - (v) 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 are okro, garden eggs and tomatoes.

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 and an example is the cocoyam.

Factors which affect the production of vegetable

- These factors are:

(1) Temperature:

- Each type of vegetable grows within a certain temperature range.
- If this temperature range is absent, then that type of vegetable crop may die or may not grow well.

(2) Rainfall:

- For vegetables to grow well, the right amount of rain must fall.

(3) Wind:

- Vegetables grow well when the wind is blowing slowly.
- They do not grow well when the wind is blowing fast.

(4) Soil colour:

- Vegetables grow well in soil whose colour is black or dark brown.
- This is due to the fact that, this type of soil contains a type of plant food called humus.

Nursery practices in vegetable cultivation:

The Nursery:

- It is a place where seedlings are raised and cared for, until 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 prepared on a small piece of fertile soil, by loosening the soil and adding organic manure so as to make the soil richer.

Nursery box (seed box):

- This is a small box made of wood or plastic in which seeds are sown.
- The seed box is filled with a special soil mixture to a depth of about 4cm.
- This special type of soil is made up of sand, loam and compost.
- There are holes around or under the seed box.
- This allows extra water in the soil it contains to drain away.

Vegetable Propagation:

- The method used in the sowing or the propagation of vegetables seeds, depends on the type and the size of the seed.
- Some common methods used are:

(1) Sowing the seeds on nursery beds, before they are later on transplanted.

- Small seeds are sown by this method and these seeds are sown using the drilling method.
- In this method, small trenches are made in the soil.
- The seeds are then carefully placed into these trenches, covered with fine soil and watered.

(2) Sowing seeds in nursery boxes before they are transplanted.

- It is also small seeds which are sown by this means, and the drilling method is also used.

(3) Planting at stake or sowing the seeds directly on the farmland.

- Seeds which are large in size are propagated or sown by this method.
- In this case also, apart from the drilling method the broadcasting method can be used in sowing the vegetable seeds.
- In the broadcasting method, the seeds are evenly spread on top of the soil, and covered with a thin layer of soil.
- The seeds are then watered.
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(4) Vegetative propagation:

- In this method, certain parts of the parent plant are used to reproduce young ones.
- Vegetables which do not produce seeds are propagated by this method.

Importance of raising seedlings in the nursery before transplanting them onto the field:

- It makes the seed to germinate quickly.
- It enables us to select only healthy seedlings for transplanting.

Source of vegetable seeds:

- You must always plant good vegetable seeds.
- Such seeds can be obtained from a seed company, or a registered seed dealer.
- Good seeds will lead to the production of healthy and diseases free crops.

Care of the nursery:

(1) watering of seedlings:

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

(2) Shading:

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

(3) Weeding:

- Since weeds compete with seedlings for sunlight, nutrients, space and water, they must be removed as soon as they appear on the nursery bed.

(4) Thinning out:

- This refers to the removal of very weak seedlings, as well as some of those seedlings which are very close to each other.

- It is important because it prevents the overcrowding of seedlings.