

Mix the seed with superphosphate fertiliser about one handful of seed to two handfuls of fertiliser.



If you cannot afford fertiliser then mix the seed with fine soil. Sow it into the rows and cover over with the soil.



Weed after 6 weeks. Keep it trimmed so that it does not overgrow in between the maize plants.



Greenleaf desmodium can also control striga in sorghum

When and how do we harvest the seed?

Harvest the seed weekly once the pods have turned brown. Hand strip the ripe pods and place seeds in a tin.



Sun dry and then thresh using a stone.



Winnow to get clean seed.



Store in a dry, clean tin or airtight container.

Desmodium seed fetches a high price so sell in the market

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Grow Desmodium and Stop Striga



Plant desmodium as an intercrop and stop striga weed growing in your maize

International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICiPE), with Rothamsted - Research KARI and the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Supported by Gatsby Charitable Foundation UK

Have you seen this weed in your maize?

It is called striga.



How bad can it be for your yields?

Striga can make you loose up to 1/2 of your crop. If you used to harvest 10 bags, once you have striga you may only harvest 5 bags.

How does the weed affect your yields?

Striga weed puts its roots into the roots of the maize/sorghum.



The weed takes the food that the maize is trying to get from the soil before it reaches the maize plant.

How can the weed be stopped?

Most recommended methods DO NOT work

- Pull up the striga and burn off the field.
 - This is hard work and the striga comes back.
- Use weed killer.
 - This is expensive and the weeds return.
- Plant maize varieties that are tolerant to striga.
 - The weed is still present, needs work and yields are often lower.
- Feed the maize with lots of fertiliser so that the plant can still produce even with the striga.
 - Expensive, hard work and the weeds stay.

GOOD NEWS

What can we do that really works?

It has been found that if you intercrop desmodium with maize then you stop the striga weed growing in the maize.



How does it work?

The desmodium covers the surface of the ground between the maize rows. It puts a chemical into the ground that the striga does not like. Therefore striga will not grow where desmodium grows.

Why is the desmodium a good plant

- It stops striga growing.
- It puts nitrogen back into the soil.
- It is a very good fodder crop for dairy cows.
- It acts as a mulch by covering the surface to prevent water loss and erosion.
- Other farmers will buy seeds from you at a good price.

What increase in yields would we get?

If you harvest 10 bags with striga then you would now get up to 15 bags of maize and good green feed for the dairy cows all year.

How do we grow this intercrop desmodium and maize?

Get hold of some desmodium seed from:

- Seed Companies (such as Western Seed Co. and Kenya Seed Co.)
- ICIPE, Mbita Point, Suba District
- Your neighbour who has started growing it

You will need about 1 Kg per acre.

Prepare the soil carefully so that it is as fine and clean as possible.

Make a furrow in the middle of the rows of maize. Use a strong pointed stick.

