

# Chickpea

## Land Preparation

Chickpea is very sensitive to soil aeration. This crop is not suitable for cultivation in heavy soils and calls for special care in seed-bed preparation. A rough, loose and well aerated seed-bed is required for chickpea. In case the chickpea crop is taken after a *kharif* fallow, it would be desirable to go for a deep ploughing during the monsoon.

## Seeds and Sowing

Second fortnight of October is the optimum time for sowing of the chickpea in most of the chickpea growing areas of northern India. For peninsular India, first fortnight of October is the best time. Delay beyond this period results in conspicuous reduction in the yield. Under humid subtropical condition of *Tarai*, first fortnight of November is the most suitable period. The crop may be sown by seed-drill or behind local plough at a row spacing of 30 to 45 cm. A seed rate of 75 to 100 kg/ha is sufficient. The seed should be placed at a depth of 8 to 10 cm.

## Water Management

Bengal gram is mostly sown as a rain fed crop. However, if irrigation facilities are available, a pre-sowing irrigation may be given to ensure proper germination and crop growth. If winter rains fail, irrigation at pre-flowering and at pod development stage may be given. No irrigation should be given at flowering time.

## Weeding

Critical crop weed competition period is 25-40 DAS. The field should be free from weeds during this period. Manual, mechanical or different cultural weed control practices should be adopted. Different botanical or mycoherbicides can also be used and synthetic chemical herbicides should strictly be avoided.

## Harvesting

At maturity, leaves will dry down but may not drop off completely. Over maturity may result in shattering. They need to be harvested when seed moisture content is 14 to 18 %. Method of harvesting depends on the nature of maturity. Generally pulses do not have synchronous maturity so pods should be harvested in two pickings. First one is done by hand & when rests are matured & plants turn yellow second picking is done by cutting. In varieties exhibiting synchronous maturity, harvesting should be done by cutting entire plant at ground level when the plants show about 90% maturity.

## Post Harvest Management

Pods or harvested crops are dried in sun for 2-3 days and then threshed. Threshing can be done either by hand or beating the pods by stick. Winnowing is done for separating the grains from husk. Then clean and dry seeds are kept in air tight poly bags or in containers for further use.