

Groundnut

Land Preparation

Deep ploughing should be avoided which will encourage development of pods in deeper layers of soils making harvesting difficult. One deep ploughing with soil turning plough followed by two harrowings are sufficient to achieve a good surface tilth up to 12 to 18 cm depth. One or two summer cultivations will minimize weeds and insect pests to a great extent in problem areas.

Seeds and Sowing

There are two types of groundnut viz., bunch type and spreading type. For bunch types, the row to row space is 30 to 40 cm and for spreading type, it is 45 to 60 cm. Plant to plant distance should be kept at 15 cm for bunch type and 20 cm for spreading type. The seed rate per hectare for bunch type is 32 to 40 kg and for spreading type, it is 24 to 32 kg. Sowing is done at a depth of 5 cm using the country plough, dibbler or seed planter.

Water Management

Groundnut does not require irrigation if raised as a rainfed crop. However, if there is a dry spell, irrigation may be necessary, irrigation should be given at pod development stage. The field should be well drained. The last irrigation just before harvesting facilitates full recovery of pods from the soil.

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

Maturity of pods is normally achieved when the vine begins to turn yellow and leaf shedding starts. It is recommended that a few plants (3 - 5) should be pulled up and the pods removed and shelled. The insides of the shells should be examined. If the majority of pods (70% upwards) have dark markings inside the shell and the seeds are plump and the correct colour for that variety, then the groundnuts are mature and ready for harvest.

The bunch type of groundnut is mostly harvested by pulling out the plants with manual labour. The spreading or semi-spreading type of groundnut is harvested either manual or by using a blade harrow or ox-plough. The soil should be sufficiently moist for easy harvesting and without losing pods in the soil.

Post Harvest Management

The correct drying or curing of the harvested groundnuts is very important as poor curing can help induce fungal growth and reduce seed quality for consumption, marketing and germination for the following seasons planting. For good storage and germination, the moisture content of the pods should be reduced to 6-8%. There are different ways of drying the pods, some of which are better than other. It is particularly important to note that if the pods are exposed to the sun for too long the seed quality can deteriorate considerably and germination can be affected. After proper curing and drying, the pods are separated from the plants. This operation is called stripping or plucking. Stripping of pods is done manually by the small farmers.