

# Sugarcane

## Land Preparation

Sugarcane needs deep tillage. In North India, sugarcane is mostly grown on alluvial loam soil. To prepare the seed-bed we should undertake one deep ploughing with soil turning plough followed by two cross harrowings or five to six ploughing with local plough. Planking should be done to make the field smooth and clod-free. In irrigated areas, fields are prepared after giving a pre irrigation but in rainfed areas, fields meant for sugarcane are left fallow during the preceding monsoon and are ploughed at certain intervals to conserve the moisture in the field till cane is planted.

## Seeds and Sowing, Transplanting

The planting material for the sugarcane is called sett. The top one third to half portion of a cane which has buds of high viability is the best for preparing the setts. The seed cane should be 10 to 12 months old. About 14000 to 16,000 setts are needed to plant one acre area. The setts of 30 to 45 cm length with three buds are normally used. Sugarcane is planted at a distance of 75 to 90 cm in either in shallow furrows (flat planting) opened by local plough or deep furrows opened by ridger. In case of trench planting, trenches are formed with help of a ridger or by manual labour.

## Water Management

Irrigation is to be given within 2-3 days after planting depending upon the moisture condition of soil. After that irrigation at an interval of 15 days and one month is to be continued before and after starting of monsoon respectively according to need. But irrigation must be given after sprouting and top dressing followed by earthing up. Irrigation should be stopped before one month of harvesting.

## Weeding

It is better to make the soil loose at 2 weeks after planting to facilitating sprouting. Weeds start germinating with the growth of sugarcane plants. 2-3 weeding with nirani can be done to make the field weed free according to need.

## Harvesting

The maturity of sugarcane is generally recognised by the lower leaves gradually withering up and leaving fewer green leaves at the top. If metallic sound is produced as and when strike with knife or it breaks easily at the joint then it is ready to harvest.

Stalks are cut at the ground level by a sharp sickle, preferably after digging down the earthed up ridges.

## Post Harvest Management

The dried leaves are stripped off from the cane and green top is cut from the topmost part of the cane and clean canes are dried up in bundles. Then these are send to the sugar mill for sugar extraction.