

IMPORTANT STEPS IN GROWING COWPEAS

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1. The cowpea is adapted to all parts of Texas wherever there is sufficient moisture for its growth. It thrives best, however, in the more humid section of the state.

2. While cowpeas will grow in practically all types of soil, even on land that is deficient in lime, they succeed best on well drained, properly inoculated and moderately rich soil.

3. Some good varieties of cowpeas are Brabham, New Era, Groit, Chinese Red, Iron, Blackeye and Whippoorwill. The Chinese Red variety is well adapted for hay as it grows upright, matures in 60 to 70 days and is easily cured.

4. The Brabham and Iron varieties are resistant to root knot and wilt and hence should be planted on land infested with these diseases. They should also be the only varieties planted in orchards on sandy land.

5. The seed bed should be prepared as well as for cotton or corn.

6. Inoculation of the seed with bacterial culture is suggested as crop insurance because there is no certain way to tell whether there are sufficient bacteria in the soil. Furthermore, experiments have shown that bacteria in the soil may become inactive and lose their power of utilizing the nitrogen of the air. Hence the presence of nodules is not always a sure indication that sufficient atmospheric nitrogen is being made available for the plants.

7. Since the cowpea is a warm weather crop, it should not be sown until the ground has become thoroughly warmed.

8. Cowpeas are well adapted to interplant with corn or grain sorghum and to plant after small grain in a rotation such as cotton, corn, oats and cowpeas.

9. When cowpeas are interplanted with corn or grain sorghum, the seed should not be planted until these crops are from two to three feet high, as earlier planting often reduces the yield of the grain crop.

✓ 10. For hay or seed, cowpeas are planted mostly in three foot rows, so that the crop may be cultivated. About 30 pounds of seed per acre is required for the larger seeded varieties such as Whippoorwill, and Blackeye, and 15 to 20 pounds per acre for the small varieties, such as Chinese Red and Brabham. When sown broadcast, at least double these amounts should be used.

11. On poor sandy soils, the crop should be fertilized with 150 to 200 pounds of superphosphate and 15 to 20 pounds of muriate of potash per acre. On very poor soils, cowpeas are also benefited by adding a small amount of nitrogen to the mixture as this gives them a quicker start.

12. As is the case with other crops, cowpeas should be kept free from weeds by shallow cultivation.

13. Cowpeas should be mowed for hay when the first pods are turning yellow. The plants should be partly cured in the swath and then shocked around poles having a cross piece about six inches above the ground.

14. The cowpea weevil in stored seed may be controlled by fumigating in a tight container with one pound of highlife per 100 cubic feet of space for 24 hours and then thoroughly ventilated so as not to injure the germination. If necessary, the treatment should be repeated in ten days to two weeks. Another method consists of passing hot air through the mass of seed, so as to subject the seed to a temperature of 120 to 140 degrees.