

## CROP HARVESTING

Harvest the well matured sunflower crop which has the following properties:

- The flowers lose/shed off the yellow petals and bends down (in modern varieties).
- The colour of the flower stock (head) turns slowly from green, yellow to brownish colour finally.

Chop the flower heads with a sharp knife and sundry them (heads up). The seed when dry drop easily from the head when gently tapped by a short piece of stick. Winnow the seed, sundry it a bit more and pack them in the bags.

Store them nicely on a rack (or pallet) to wait for the buyer/good prices.

Make sure that the store is free from rodents by using a suitable rodenticide or practice biological controls like cats etc.

The farmer can easily harvest from 10 to 16 bags and even more per acre, depending on the level of management experience and the weather conditions.

For More Information,  
Contact:

## Faida MaLi

( Faida Market Link)

Sekei Area

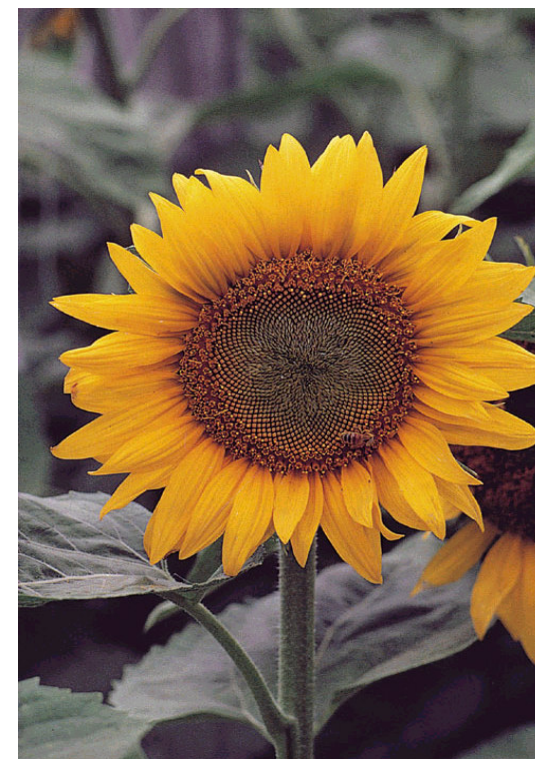
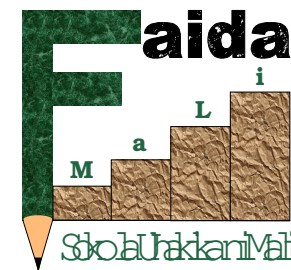
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*Sunflower Information*

## INTRODUCING THE SUNFLOWER CROP

Sunflower is one of the edible oilseed which is cultivated well in both cool and warm weather conditions. The crop is commercially grown for edible oil extraction and the seed cake is a good source of protein in livestock feeding.

The crop thrives well in different soils with a wide pH range particularly deep fertile ones. Similarly it demands an average amount of rainfall, good soil moisture particularly during flowering stage. The gestation period is 3–5 months depending on the variety.

### LAND PREPARATION

The fields must be deeply ploughed for good roots penetration, and well harrowed to suppress weeds an activity which must preferably be done 2–4 weeks before seed sowing. If/where the soil is poor, manures must be incorporated in the field, preferably before harrowing.

### SEED SOWING

The farmer must strive to sow good quality seed. Ask your local Agriculture Extension Officer to be well guided on this aspect. In areas/regions with heavy long duration amount of rains the farmer may grow the sunflower seed immediately after the first torrential rains. Where as in areas with moderate amount of rainfall, the farmer can sow the seeds at the beginning of the rainy season. The seed rate is 2 kg for hybrid seed sown at a distance of 75 cm between the rows and 25 cm between the plants on the rows. Plant two seeds per each hole. Seed depth varies between 2.5 to 5.0 cm on the row. The farmer must inspect and infill the rows by fresh seed to fill the gaps in the field after a week or so after germination.

Farmers can also plant the sunflower seeds by ox-ploughs. This is done by dropping the seed at a distance of 15–20 cm on the row—every 4th soil slice in the ox-ploughing process. Weeding has to be done just like in maize crop.

## PESTS AND DISEASES IN THE FIELD

Pests Diseases	Physical symptoms.	Protection/remedy
Cutworms	The pest cuts the seedling at infant stage at the soil line level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sow chemically treated seed or drench the seeds with suitable chemicals before planting</li> <li>Spray suitable chemicals (if heavy devastation) e.g. Thionex EC or Sevin 85% EC.</li> </ul>
Rodents (and birds eg wild geese)	These vermins burrows into the soil to eat the seed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use suitable rodenticide—mix it with maize/wheat bran baits on the field.</li> <li>If the crop is sown in wet weather, the problem ceases dramatically.</li> </ul>
White flies, and other chewing and sucking insects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These pests makes holes/chopes the plant foliage.</li> <li>White flies suck the plant sap thereby transmitting plant diseases and malformations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of fumigative or systemic chemicals e.g. thionex or actelic EC. Read the instruction given on the chemical leaflet for safe and effective use of these chemicals.</li> </ul>
Rots: Rootrot stem rot or/and headrots. (sclerotinia rots)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The root stem or and heads of the crop have black watery lesions of rots with foul smell.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use good quality seed chemically treated with suitable fungicide and pesticides.</li> <li>Observe and practice crop rotation in the field.</li> <li>Burn crop residues to break the pests and disease cycle in the field.</li> </ul>
Wild birds/vermins eg. quelea wild doves etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They eat all the seed on the flowers soon after flowering; and if not controlled they can lead to 100% loss of the crop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers should sow the seed at 1 time period in the area to share the vermin pressure / load.</li> <li>Seed sown in one area if possible must be of same variety so as to ripen at one time.</li> <li>Scare the birds/put suitable measures in the field soon after flowering (1 month).</li> <li>Avoid bushy and forest neighbouring area for sunflower growing fields if/where possible.</li> </ul>