

MODULE 3

Planting, thinning, weeding and top dressing

DRY PLANTING

Dry planting should be encouraged where risk of loss of seed to birds like Izikwehle and other rodents is minimal.

Where dry-land planting is adopted, ensure that seed is planted deep enough such that it is not affected by light showers leading to rots. Plant to a depth of 2 cm.

PLANTING IN WET SOILS

Millet/Sorghum/Maize – 1st effective rains (20mm) after 10 November or plant with the first rains that fill the planting stations.

Groundnuts – 1st effective rains (20mm) after 10 November or plant with the first rains that fill the planting stations.

Cowpeas – 1st effective rains after 15 December.

NB: Always plant early with the first rains.

THINNING CEREAL CROPS (MILLET AND SORGHUM)

Thin millet and sorghum crops at 3 weeks after emergence as follows:

- Where more than 2 plants emerge in the same planting station, remove the weakest plants and leave 2 plants.
- Where a planting station has 1 plant, compensate for planting population by leaving 3 plants in 1 of the adjacent planting stations.
- Where a planting station has no plant, compensate for planting population by leaving 3 plants in 2 of the adjacent planting stations.



Thinning



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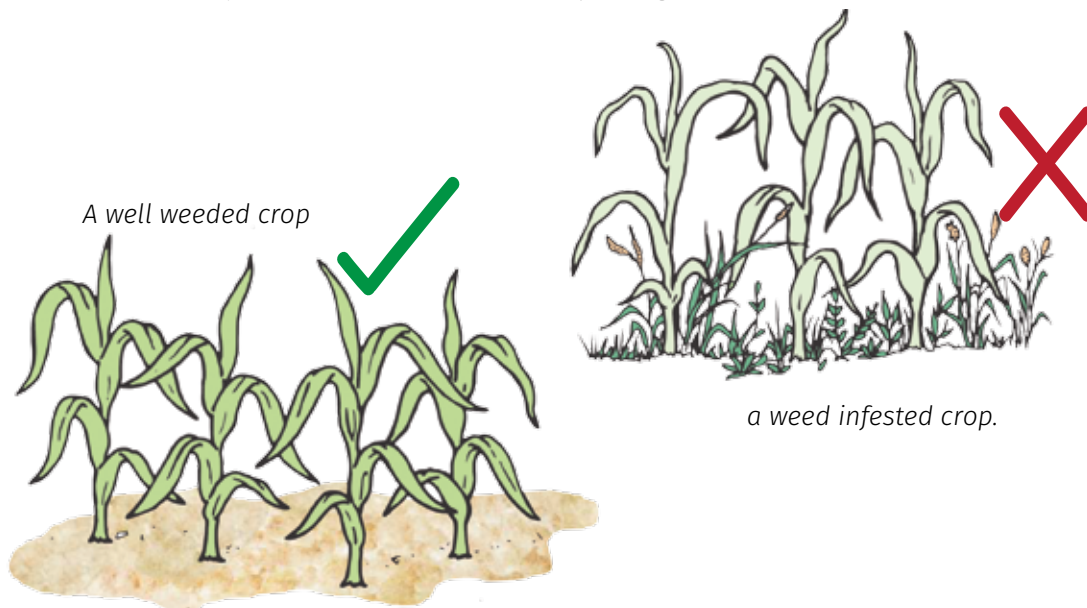


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WEED CONTROL

Weeds compete with crops for water, sun light, air, manure and fertilizer.

- Weeds must therefore be controlled early (at 3 week after emergence) when they are still small and easier to control.
- Application of mulch in the field or in seedbeds helps to smother weeds, thereby reducing their capacity to compete with crops.
- Always control weeds in time and prevent them seeding in order to reduce weed pressure.
- Weeds can be controlled by use of a hand hoe, hand pulling and/ or herbicides.

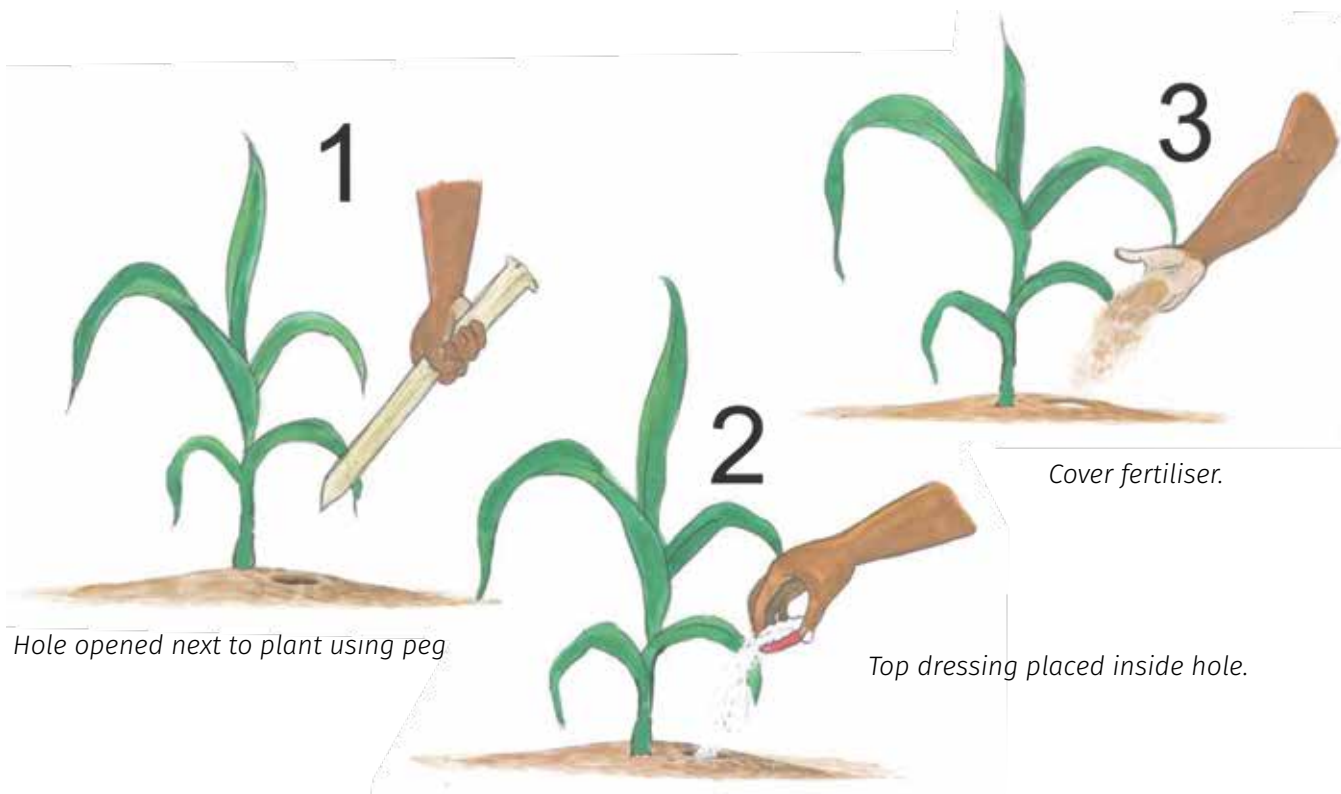


TOP DRESSING

- Apply top dressing to sorghum and millet from 3 weeks after emergence.
- On sandy soils, split applications are recommended such that half the fertilizer is applied at 3-4 weeks after emergence and the other half at 6-7 weeks after emergence.
- Top dressing should be applied after thinning and weeding.
- Top dressing must be applied to wet soils only.

TOP DRESSING / CONTINUED

1 Where the top soil is dry, use a peg make a hole next to the plant (5 – 10 cm deep, match box length), apply top dressing to the moist sub-soil and cover the hole with soil as shown in the illustration below.

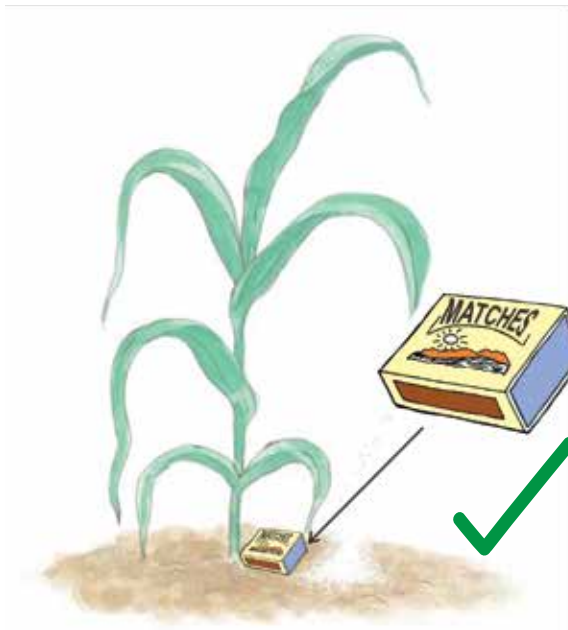


2 On sloping ground, top dressing must be applied on the upward side of the crop as shown below.



The top dressing is applied on upward side of the crop.

3 Top dressing fertilizer must not be in contact with the plant but must be applied 5-10cm (match box length) away from the plant as shown below.

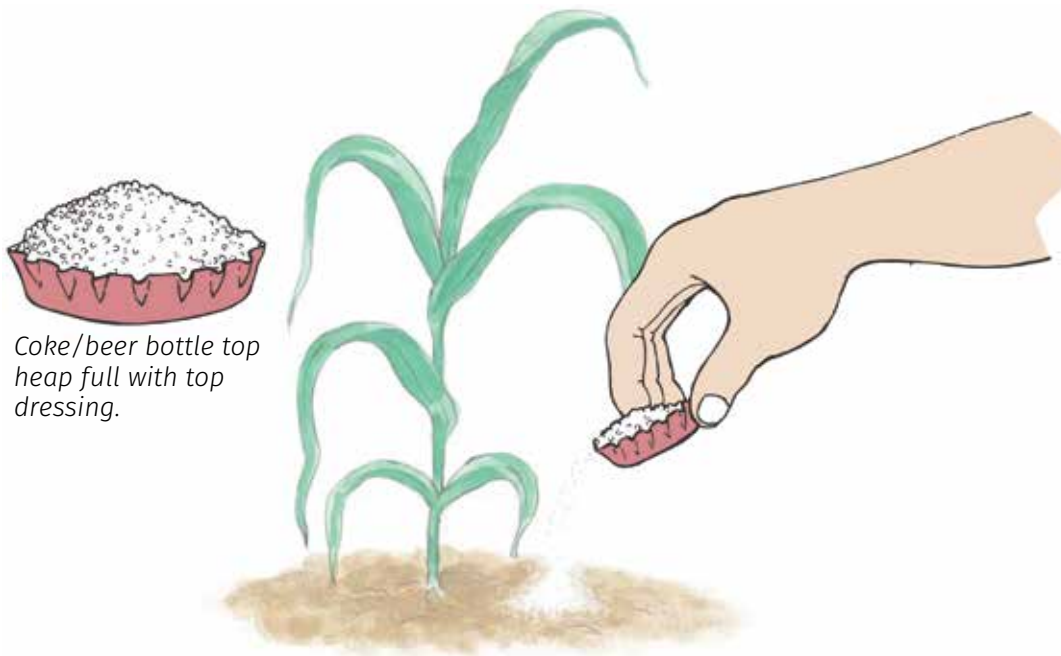


Plant with top dressing placed at the right distance from the plant (match box away).



Do not let top dressing be in contact with the plant.

4 Apply one heaped coke/beer bottle top per station.



Coke/beer bottle top heap full with top dressing.

NB: Consult your nearest extension agent if you need additional information on planting, thinning, weeding and top dressing.