

## Harvest of Crotalaria

When it is time to sow the next crop, uproot the crotalaria plants and lay these on the soil surface or incorporate them into the soil. Till the land if weedy and plant the following crop in rows. Arrange the plant residue of Crotalaria in bands between the rows.

Alternatively the plants can be dried in the field so the leaves drop onto the soil and the woody stems removed for use as fuel.



**Note: Crotalaria needs to be planted shallow in the soil and will not germinate if buried by soil. It should be planted at the same depth as you plant millet**

## Harvesting seed

Harvest mature seed of crotalaria and keep for sowing in other fields in following seasons.

## Pests of Crotalaria

The caterpillars of an orange butterfly can attack *Crotalaria grahamiana* and caution should be taken when harvesting the plants or seeds as the hairy caterpillars can cause skin rashes. The caterpillar does not affect the benefits of the legume in soil fertility

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# IMPROVE SOIL PRODUCTIVITY WITH CROTALARIA



*Crotalaria ochroleuca*

## General Information

Growing nitrogen-fixing legumes and incorporating the biomass into the soil before planting a food crop can improve soil productivity and the yields of the following crop.

Crotalaria is one such legume plant and there are several different species for use in soil fertility management. The three common species are *Crotalaria grahamiana*, *Crotalaria paulina* and *Crotalaria ochroleuca*. These different species are good for different purposes on the farm.

*Crotalaria paulina* and *Crotalaria ochroleuca* are very suitable for intercropping. *Crotalaria grahamiana* is favoured for sole crop production for replenishment of low fertility soils. *Crotalaria grahamiana* is also good at controlling weeds during the fallow.

Crotalaria should not be grown often as a fallow species to avoid disease build up that will affect following Crotalaria fallows. Occasionally rotate the different fallow species to prevent pest and disease build-up, e.g. use *Sesbania* and *Mucuna*

## Uses of Crotalaria

### Intercropped with maize

Sow Crotalaria at the same time as sowing maize. Sow approximately 40 seeds per metre in a row between the maize rows. Allow the Crotalaria to grow after harvesting maize until it is time to plant the next crop.

### Intercropped with beans

Sow Crotalaria between rows of beans after first weeding. Allow it to grow after the bean harvest until it is time to plant the next crop.

### Intercropped with newly planted banana or coffee

Sow Crotalaria in 50 cm rows between banana and coffee rows. Avoid planting close to the banana or coffee plants to reduce competition between the plants.

### Crotalaria as a vegetable

*Crotalaria ochroleuca* can be grown in your home garden and the young leaves eaten as a vegetable

### Intercropped with sweet potato

Sow Crotalaria where the furrows between the soil mounds intersect at the time of making the mounds

## Uses of Crotalaria (continued)

### Intercropped with cassava

Sow Crotalaria in 50 cm rows between the cassava plants at the time of planting the cassava.

### Use of Crotalaria as a fallow species

All species of Crotalaria can be sown on land that is to be left fallow for one or more seasons. The seeds can be broadcast and raked into the soil or planted in rows as described earlier in this leaflet.

### Use for reducing root-knot nematodes

Certain species like *Sesbania* and *Tephrosia* can increase nematode numbers in the soil. *Crotalaria ochroleuca* can be grown to control these nematodes

### Crotalaria for livestock feed

Crotalaria has no feed value for livestock. A forage species like, *Calliandra*, *Cratylia* or cowpea should be grown instead