



## SEED DISTRIBUTION ANNOUNCED



The Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy during the announcement of the seed distribution date at the Agriculture Headquarter in Raiwaqa.

The next round of seeds distribution for home gardens begins next Tuesday, announced the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy on 26 August.

The Minister made the major announcement at the Ministry Head Quarters in Raiwaqa.

"We will be targeting 20,000 home gardeners over the next four-month period or 5,000 home gardens every month.

"This will include seeds for the following crops: tomatoes, cabbage, eggplant, long beans, French beans, and okra.

"These will be given out from our strategic Agriculture Offices that are directly involved with urban and peri-urban dwellers throughout Fiji," the Minister said.

Dr. Reddy said those who were

interested could walk into any of the Ministry's offices, provide a valid ID and pick up the seed packages for free.

"We encourage them to expand their home garden and secure their family and household security in respect to food."

The Minister said the reason the total number of seed packages was less compared to the first time the distribution started was due to households retaining seeds after harvesting from their first crops.

He said Government was now focused on boosting the efforts of the current beneficiaries while encouraging new households, who missed out from the first rounds, to begin or even expand their home gardens.

"As part of the overall food security and agriculture strategy,

seed and planting provision to farmers were an integral component to that strategy.

"Planting provision too to home gardeners in the urban areas and farm support program to expand the commercial agriculture program that the Ministry began are also vital aspects of the strategy," the Minister said.

The Ministry's offices in the North are located in Cakaudrove, Savusavu, Taveuni, Bua, Naboulwalu, Lutua, Macuata, and Labasa. In the Central Division, the Extension Offices are in Serua, Namosi, Naitasiri, Rewa, Lami, Suva, Tailevu South, Tailevu North, Koronivia Research Station, and the Ministry Head Quarters in Raiwaqa. In the West, the Ministry have offices in the various towns, while in the Eastern Division there are in Lomaiviti, Lau, and Kadavu.

## GENERAL GUIDE FOR PLANTING

### TOMATOES

#### When to plant

- Tomatoes can be grown all year round. Best results are shown in the cool season.
- Sow seeds every month for a regular supply of produce.
- Fruiting will be affected in temperatures of more than 32°C.

#### How to grow good seedlings

- Prepare seedbed on a well-chosen site.
- Seedbed should be raised, well-drained and rich in organic matter.
- If possible dig in compost while preparing your seedbed.
- Sow seeds thinly in rows 3 to 6 inches (7.5 - 15cm) apart in the seedbed.
- Cover the seedbed with sarlon cloth/coconut leaves to prevent direct sunlight.
- Water the seedbed either early in the morning or late in the afternoon when it is cool.
- Gradually remove shade 1 week before transplanting.

#### Transplanting

- Transplant when seedlings are about 3 to 4 weeks old or when they reach 3 to 4 leaf stage.
- Seedbed should be watered half an hour before lifting the seedlings. Dig, don't pull seedlings out.
- Have your soil well prepared before planting. Best results are obtained by planting on ridges during off-season/ rainy season.
- The seedlings are planted 60cm x 30cm apart on top of the ridges.
- Transplanting of seedlings needs to be done late in the afternoon or on a dull day.

#### Staking

A-shape staking is recommended where plants are planted 30-40cm between plants within the rows and 60cm-1.0m between rows. Tie the stem loose onto the stakes with raffia as plant grows.

### Harvesting

Tomatoes are ready to be harvest in 10 to 12 weeks from transplanting, and generally picking continues for 6 to 10 weeks. Fruits can be harvested from colour break.

### EGGPLANT

#### When to plant

Eggplants can be planted all year round, however there may be a drop in yields during the cooler season.

#### How to grow good seedlings

- Prepare seedbed on a well-chosen site.
- Seedbed should be raised, well-drained and rich in organic matter.
- If possible dig in compost while preparing your seedbed.
- Sow seeds thinly in rows 3 to 6 inches (7.5 - 15cm) apart in the seedbed.
- Cover the seedbed with sarlon cloth/coconut leaves to prevent direct sunlight.
- Water the seedbed either early in the morning or late in the afternoon when it is cool.
- Gradually remove shade 1 week before transplanting.

#### Transplanting

- Transplanting when seedlings are at 3leaf stage (4-5 weeks). Harden seedlings before transplanting.
- Seedbed should be watered half an hour before lifting the seedlings. Lift, don't pull seedlings out the trays.
- Transplant late in the afternoon or on a dull day.
- Water the plants after transplanting.

#### Spacing

- 0.5m-0.75m between plants within the rows and 1.5m between rows.

### Harvesting

Harvesting starts after 60 to 90 days from transplanting. Harvest tender fruits.

### CHINESE CABBAGE

#### When to Plant

Cabbages can be grown all year round however, best results are obtained during cooler months especially for head type varieties sown from March to October. A small patch of cabbage planted every 2 weeks will ensure a consistent supply.

#### How to Plant

- Cabbage seeds are sown in the seedling trays and transplanted into well prepared plot at 3-leaf stage [about 3 to 4 weeks after sowing]. Sow one seed per hole in the tray.
- If using the seedbed, ensure that it is well prepared to a fine tilth. Mix the seeds with some sand or wood ash so that seeds will be sow thinly in lines in the seedbed. Spread some fine soil over the seedbed and water.
- It is a good idea to construct a simple shelter over the seedlings to protect them from strong sunshine and heavy rainfall.
- Remove the shelter gradually to harden the seedlings.
- Wet the seedling tray before lifting the seedlings to protect the roots from damaging.
- Seedlings raised in the seedling trays can be transplanted anytime of the day provided if sufficient water is supplied. However, it is better to transplant in the afternoon.

#### Spacing

75cm between the rows and 30cm between the plants within the rows.

### Harvesting

- Chinese cabbage will normally take 4 to 6 weeks to get ready depending on varieties.
- Wash the plants well of dirt before consuming.
- Great care must be taken while handling the crop because cabbages are very fragile

### OKRA

#### When to plant

- Okra is a tropical vegetable, which can be grown at any time of the year. Better harvest is achieved during the warm/wet months from October to March. Planting at this time will also minimise pest and diseases occurrence.
- Where irrigation is available, okra can also be planted during the cool/dry months ensuring a year round supply.

#### How to Plant

- Okra is a direct seeded crop.

#### Spacing

- Furrows to be 1m apart. Plant to be 30cm apart in furrows.
- Place two seeds 30cm apart in rows. Cover seeds lightly with soil.

### Harvesting

The crop starts bearing at 6 to 8 weeks after planting and harvesting continues for 8 -10 weeks.

### LONGBEAN

#### When to Plant

- Long beans can be planted all year round but performs best during hot and wet season.

#### How to Plant

- Long bean is a direct seeded crop.

#### Spacing

- Sow seeds 30cm between plants within the rows and 1m

between rows.

- Germinates in 3 - 6 days after sowing.

### Crop Management

Long beans needs to be staked for ease of harvesting and assist in the proper maintenance of the crop.

### Harvesting

- Harvest after 6-8 weeks from planting.
- Pick pods when still tender and harvesting continues for about 2-3 weeks.

### FRENCH BEAN

#### When to Plant

French beans can be grown all year round. However, best results are obtained during cooler months. For year round supply, plant a small patch every 3 to 4 weeks.

#### How to Plant

French beans are directly sown into the well prepared plots. Irrigation is required in dry weather.

#### Spacing

French bean is planted 15 to 20cm between plants within the rows and 50cm between rows.

### Harvesting

French beans are ready for harvest at 42 to 56 days after planting and should continue for a month. Harvest frequently while the pods are tender. Store the harvested produce in shade to maintain the quality.

