ROYAL TIMES NEWSLETTER

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QUALITY SEEDS FOR AFRICA

ISSUE NO. #14

Kenya Highland Seed Co. Ltd.
For greater production

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY TRAINING HELD ON 5TH OF JUNE, 2023

Our Theme for the day - Sowing the Seeds for our future.The training was carried out at our Royal Seed, **CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**! involving 15 Female Students from Kanani Girls High School accompanied by their 5 agriculture teachers.

We partnered with East West Seed Kenya & The Amara Charitable Trust who assisted in making the event a great Success!
The focus areas of training were in-house seed-raising chambers and our internal Demonstr-ation/Trial Farm.

NURSERY SEED-RAISING CHAMBERS

At the Nursery, the students got to learn about the different soilless media used for propagation and this including Peat moss & Vermiculite which we use on our site,

The students were involved practically, especially in the planting part. This was important as it equipped them with the knowledge of what is happening in our world today in terms of seed raising. Farmers are setting aside conventional seed-raising methods and embarking on modern ways which are safe to use. The method ensures good germination of seeds and most importantly disease-free seedlings.

The seedlings raised in a modern way don't suffer from transplanting shock as the roots are always intact, they are given the right duration to harden off before transplanting.

"An idealist is one who, on noticing that a rose smells better than a cabbage, concludes that it makes a better soup."
— H.L. Mencken, A Book of Burlesques

SCAN ME

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The students also got to see and learn about different crop cultivars and the duration taken by different crops to germinate in the germination room before being moved to the hardening area. They also got to learn about the purpose of the different traps we have in the Nursery (Yellow traps for white flies, blue traps for thrips, and the yellow and blue roller traps meant for the same purpose).

TRIAL/DEMONSTRATION FIELD

At the trial Field, they got to learn on;

- Different aspects of crop growth
- Mode of irrigation
- Different methods of curbing crop pests
- Harvesting of crops

Besides the basic education, they got to learn on the economic value of different crops and how one can easily earn a living from farming. This mainly touched on lettuce whereby it's a less common produce in the market and demand is quite higher than the supply, Large- or Small-Scale farming can fetch a good price in the market, unlike the common vegetables everyone grows.

We also educated the students about the importance of conserving the environment and most importantly the importance of planting trees.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kanani Secondary School was founded back in 2013 and established under a non-profitable organization known as The Amara Charitable Trust. The School has a Young Farmer's Club which has been active throughout its inception & has so far practiced farming projects such as; CABBAGE, CARROTS, TOMATOES, KALES & ONIONS.

Vision & main Objective: Empowering the Students to tap this knowledge for their future endeavors in these ever-changing ecological conditions.

What a Fantastic Day we had!

Pretoria Field Day

TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

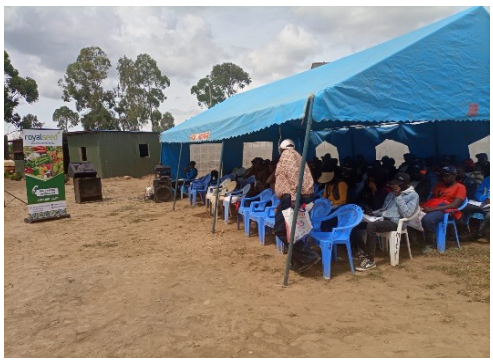
SEED: With a high seed count of 200-240 seeds per gram **Pretoria F1** beats the competition giving farmers /seed raisers an upper hand due to fewer seeds per acre about 60-75 grams.

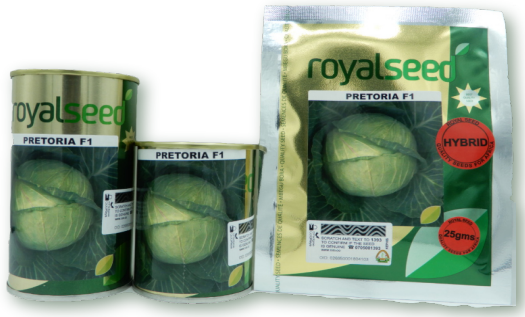
GERMINATION PERCENTAGE: With a high germination percentage of up to >90% the farmer is assured of his planned acreage.
MATURITY: An early maturing variety of about 75 days after transplanting.

FIELD HOLDING CAPACITY: can stay up to 21 days after maturity without bursting the head.

LONG SHELF LIFE: Has long wrapper leaves which protect the head during long-distance transportation ensuring a long shelf life.

DATE:15/6/2023. LOCATION PLATINUM FARM. COUNTY: LAIKIPIA.





NURSERY MANAGEMENT: this is the sum of activities performed for the successful production, care, and marketing of seedlings/ cuttings, etc. in a different nursery section. Nurseries should be located close to a water source, in an area with proper topography(flat for conventional nurseries), and secure.

PESTS, DISEASES &CONTROL: damping off-caused by several soil-borne fungi and fungus-like organisms including Pythium, Phytophthora, Rhizoctonia, and Fusarium, which infect seedlings and cause them to damp off or collapse and decay.
control: avoid over-watering and use of fungicides with metalaxyl as the active ingredient.

LAND PREPARATION: prepare land into a fine tilth avoiding large clods which could hinder the young seedling's development.

SPACING &TRANSPLANTING: farmers mostly have a high seed rate per acre giving them more heads per acre as compared to pre-determined plants per acre. Leading to non-uniform heads which leads further to poor prices.
The recommended spacing per acre is 60 by 60 giving a plant population of 11000 and 60 by 45 giving a plant population of 15000.

FERTILIZER APPLICATION:

PESTS AND DISEASES.

➢**DIAMOND BACK MOTH**:
also known as the cabbage moth is a destructive pest of the brassica crops worldwide. While infestations can occur at any time of the year they tend to be more prevalent during dry warm conditions.

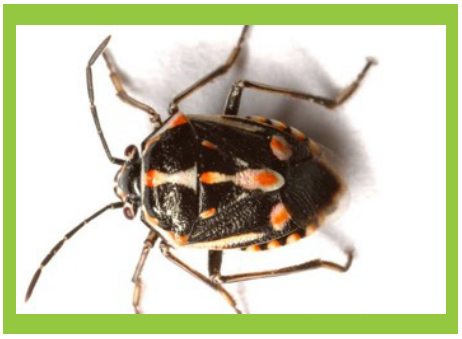
Chemical control: chemicals e.g. belt which is soft on beneficial organisms.
BIOLOGICAL CONTROL e.g. halt neo with bacillus thurigensis as the A.I.
Cultural practices: removal of host plants e.g. canola.

➢**THRIPS**:
damage the leaf by sucking sap affecting photosynthesis
control: use of insecticides containing imidacloprid as the active ingredients.

➢**APHIDS:**
damage the leafy by sucking sap from the leafs affecting photosynthesis
control: use of insecticides containing alpha, cipher, and lambacyhalothrins as the active ingredient.

➢**BAGRADA BUG**:

also known as a painted bug/stink bug damage the development of multiple shoots.



➢**BIOLOGICAL CONTROL:**
eggs of bragada are parasitized by flies(e.g.alophora sp)
CHEMICAL: use of chemicals containing chlorpyrifos has shown great effect against the bug.

DISEASES

➢**BLACK ROT:**
Caused by bacteria campestral pv campestral. Bacteria can infect any plant in the Brassica family but tends to be most damaging in broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and kale. The disease is soil-borne but can also be spread through infected seeds.

Control:

1. Use certified clean seeds.
2. Removal of weeds in the brassica family.
3. Remove the remains of the crop immediately after harvesting.
4. Chemical control.
5. Use of copper-based fungicides used as preventative spray has proved effective against the disease.

Our Laboratory

UPDATES ON OUR LABORATORY

The lab performs a critical function in the agricultural industry: testing seed samples to ensure that seeds purchased by farmers are of high quality, meet minimum germination standards, and are free from noxious weed seeds.

This lab was established in the year 2022 and it is currently fulfilling the following tasks:

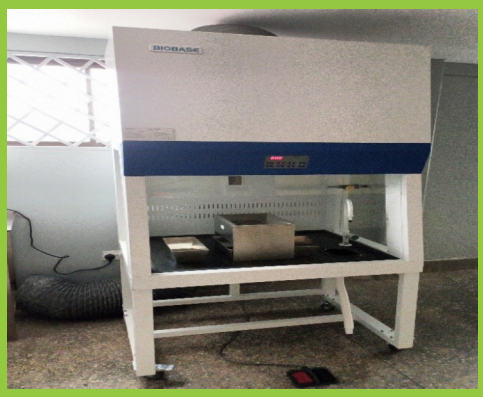
Sampling
1. In-house germination test analysis.
2. Purity analysis
3. Moisture Test.

It contains dark room chambers for germination tests on high-value products and other seeds.

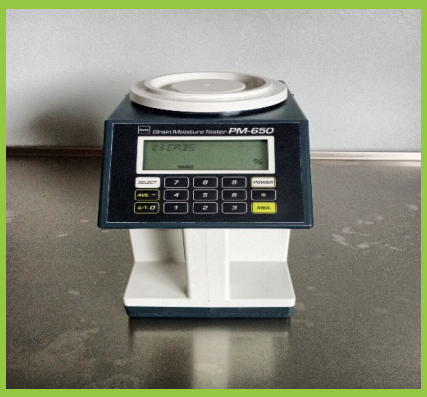
Our future projections are to have:

- Water test analysis
- Soil test analysis. i.e. Nutrient content both Micro/Macro, PH test.

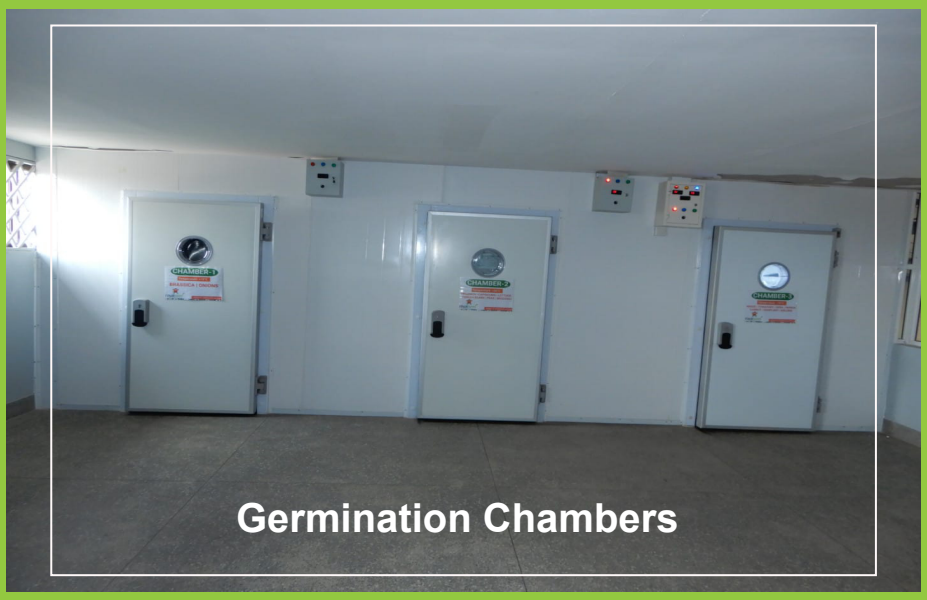
Seed Testing



Fume Hood



Moisture Meter



Germination Chambers

SUSTAINABLE FARMING AT THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE, ROYAL SEED

INTRODUCTION

Under the changing agricultural scenario, there is a need to shift from production to profit-oriented sustainable farming.

The balance between economic return and environmental concern within the context of research for sustainable agriculture can be achieved through careful evaluation of input and output. At Royal Seed the center of excellence, we have worked hard to ensure that we are conserving the environment as much as we would like to increase production.

We are practicing sustainable farming through the following ways

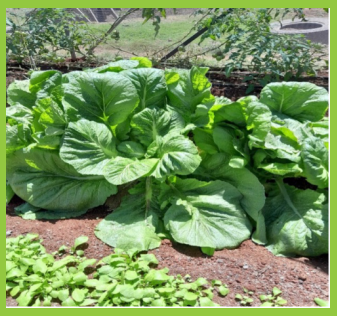
- Rotating crops and embracing diversity

Crop rotation helps the soil maintain particular nutrients for a variety of crops, thus allowing for soil sustainability over time.

Instead of using plots of land for the same crops when planting demonstration and trial crops, we have come up with beds for rotating the crops based on nutritional needs.

- Planting cover crops and perennials

Cover crops can be used to improve soil fertility and in this case, they are known as green manure crops. Cover crop canopies reduce the impact of raindrops and decrease the breakdown of the soil structure and soil aggregates, which greatly reduces soil erosion



We have embraced planting cover crops such as mustard, cowpeas, Alfalfa (Lucerne), Sunflower and rape seed at our trial fields. These crops also act as nitrogen fixers and weed suppressers.

- Reducing and eliminating tillage

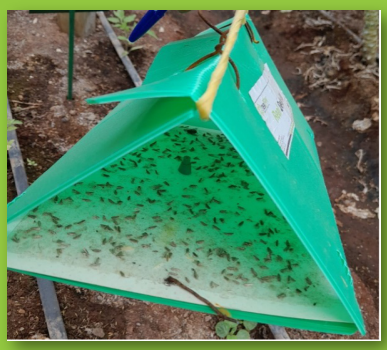
Minimum tillage has undeniable benefits on the soil like promoting biological activity and increasing water holding capacity infiltration rates.

This therefore leads to greater available soil moisture, improved soil tilth and increased organic matter content.

- Applying integrated pest management

IPM is a process of solving pest problems while minimizing risk to people and the environment.

We have resulted to using insects traps that trap the major pests at our trial farm and nursery.



This has resulted in reduced chemical sprays.

This sustainability has led to a protected ecosystem and a conserved environment for future generations.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable farming is an integrated approach, where all aspects of farming systems are interlinked with each other.

The strategies mentioned above can be followed for a gradual change. Sustainable, agriculture gives equal weight to environmental, social, and economic concerns in agriculture.

VISIT US AT OUR ROYAL SEED COMPLEX

Trans-view Estate, Close to East Africa Portland, Sports Club. Athi River.

Google maps pin directions to royal seed.

https://goo.gl/maps/afNdD253DTDFBGzY6

P.O Box 63879 - 00619

Nairobi. Kenya.

info@khs.co.ke

www.royalseed.biz

0800 720 250

+254 725 549 997 | 0734 257 635

+254 793 248 085 | 0793 248 086

+254 203 562 700 | 0202 403 214

+254 110 896 332 | 0110 896 331

+254 780 884 087

ROYAL SEED UGANDA

Osho Chemical Complex, On liberty ICD Road Opposite EWA Miriam General Trading Co. Namanve Industrial Area Uganda

+256 750 584 620 | 414 231 385

414 231 386

ROYAL SEED TANZANIA

Themi Industrial Area, Njoro Arusha

+255 758 888 781 | 0757 466 746

ROYAL SEED NIGERIA

Royal Vertarg Global Resources Ltd, No 6 Oyeleke street of Kuairat Abiola way by Alusa Bus Stop Ikeja, Lagos Nigeria

+23 470 69 677 560

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