How do I control banana weevils and other pests



ASK THE EXPERT

Compiled by Christine Katende

Send your questions to features@ug.nationmedia.com

Banana weevils is one of the biggest challenges banana farmers in Uganda face. These black and small weevils drill holes in the lower part plant near the ground, thereby interfering with the water movement. You can control them by applying dust ban or furadan on the plants. Additionally, the weevils can be trapped by covering banana leaves around the plant. Since weevils need moisture for their survival, they would gather under the leaf. Consequently, you can occasionally remove the leaves killing them in the process. Also, avoid placing the mulches near the banana plant as this will also make it easy for weevils to attack your bananas. The mulches should be at least two feet from the stool. The farmer should also use clean planting materials such as tissue culture plantlets or well paired healthy suckers, good crop husbandry like de-stumping and splitting the corm and pseudo stem that could remove the weevil breeding grounds. Farmers should also use traps (pseudo splits) and chemicals (pesticides) such as Dursban or Furadan as instructed by extension workers.

Answered by Dr Ssettuba Mukasa, Senior lecturer in Makerere University, school of Agricultural sciences.



What is the best planting spacing for watermelons?

On a large scale production, few seeded varieties are currently grown; watermelons are planted on flat beds two metres wide and 20 to 30centimeters high. However, you can also decide to space watermelons using measurements of two by two metres, the seed rate should be two seeds per hole.
In direct – seeded planting, a seed is placed 1.2 to 1.9centimetres deep. After thinning and side dressing, furrows are reformed to the condition prior to furrow irrigation.
With fertilisation, watermelons have moderate nutrient requirements compared to other vegetable crops.
Because of its deep rooting, it is efficient in extracting nutrient requirements from the soil.
We recommend compound NPK (4:17:11) for basal fertiliser application and Ammonium Nitrate (34.5N) as top dressing.

Answered by Dr Segawa Mike Ssali, an agronomist working with Holland Green-Tech Company in Muyenga

How easily can smallholders get access to aBi funds?

I wish to thank you for expressing interest to work with aBi. aBi offers both technical and financial support to agribusiness, to develop the private sector. Our support is in form of machine grants and business development and we support various financial institutions to ensure access to lines of credit and guarantee to agri businesses. However, to qualify for our support your idea must focus on increasing employment, increasing farmers' production, and productivity.
We also consider farmers who are in village associations such as the SACCOs. You can apply for our funds but take note of the requirements.

Answered by, George Mutagubya, the aBi Advocacy and Communications Manager.

Is jackfruit farming profitable?



The jackfruit is one of the most sought after crop in Uganda. That means its demand is high. Every farm product with high demand automatically brings in money. Urban Ugandans today are eating a lot of jackfruit. You can actually benefit from this demand by planting for the future. You can also make money by adding value to the jackfruit. In Kayunga and Jinja Districts, farmers are heavily engaged in value addition. You too can jump on the bandwagon and rake in some money.
All you need is to start planting today for commercial purposes.

Answer by Mohamed Were, Chairperson, Fruits of the Nile Growers Association, Kangulumira, Kayunga District.

Why do my birds lose weight when I stop feeding them on pellets?

Pellet feeds have the best ingredients due to the high nutritional value. However, pellets are best for broilers since their mechanism is to convert feeds into meat. With pellets, birds feed and grow faster.
Pellets are easily digested compared to mash that is eaten at a slower pace thus slowing down digestion and retarding the weight gain. There is increased feed intake and subsequent weight gain that is suitable for the market when birds are fed on pellets.
However, most of the feeds on the market come mixed yet chicken are picky eaters.
Because they do not like the protein source in these feeds, they revert to tossing it on the ground thus losing weight over time.
The quality of the other poultry feeds in crumble form is compromised by the businessman to maximise profit.
Since pellets are quite expensive, it would be better to at least feed the birds on pellets for the first four months then switch to other feeds.
Then it will be hard for the birds to lose weight as it is when other feeds are introduced at an early stage.

Answered by Samuel Ssewagudde, a veterinary doctor affiliated to Genesis East Africa limited



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