Intercropping maize with pigeon peas

It is important for the maize quality to intercrop maize plants with pigeon peas.

Maize needs lots of nutrients from the soil. During every harvest, important nutrients will be removed. After a few years the field loses fertility and maize plants lose quality, because the soil cannot rest. If maize plants doesn‘t become enough nutrients, they become pale and stunted.

Pigeon peas

Pigeon peas can give the soil nutrients back. The plant takes nitrogen from the air. Over its root nodules it gives them to the soil. The roots, leaves and stems of the plant are helping the soil as well. Pigeon peas can survive the dry season, because their roots go deep inside the ground.

Mixing maize and pigeon peas

There are some possibilities to mix maize and pigeon peas together.

One opportunity is, to plant pigeon peas in a distance of 75 centimetres apart from each other. Directly between you add one maize plant.

Another way is to plant two rows of maize with one row of pigeon peas. Pigeon peas should always be 75 cm apart from each other, so that they get enough sunlight. Furthermore, the ridges should be 30 centimetres high. You should plant 3 seeds of pigeon peas on every planting station and about 5 centimetres deep in the soil. In the maize rows you plant a healthy maize seed every 25 centimetres. This gives the plant enough space to absorb nutrients. Make sure to plant both

plants on the same day, so that they get the first heavy rain together.

A third possibility is to plant both plants in the same row again but planting pigeon peas on the same planting stations. Therefore, the rows should be 75 centimetres apart again. You add a maize seed every 25 centimetres. On every third planting station you put a pigeon pea seed as well. So, the pigeon peas are still 75 centimetres apart from each other. Plant the maize along the middle line, and the pigeon peas on the side of the row.