Organic Cassava Farming, Cultivation Practices

Cassava is a family member of euphorbiaceae. It is also called manihot, mandioca or yuca. At the organic crop farming, crop management starts by giving the plant the best growing conditions.

Improving soil fertility and by using healthy and suitable planting materials will make the entire crop grow healthier and thus produce more yields. In organic farming there is no use of pesticides or synthetic fertilizers and no genetically modified organisms. Cassava is usually grown in savannah climate but can also be grown in extreme rainfall areas but not in flooding areas. Cassava tolerates a wide range of soil ph values from 5.5 to 6.5. It is most productive in full sunny conditions grown on low fertility sandy soils without any soil improvements.

Climatic conditions

Cassava organically grows well between 30 degrees south to 30 degrees north in areas where annual rainfall is more than 750mm a year. Temperature is above 18 degrees and altitude of 1500-2000m

Cassava is propagated by cuttings because it is a root crop. Cassava needs well drained sandy loam soil and must be fed with compost to increase the organic matter and overall fertility. Cassava is propagated by planting pieces of stem since its roots can not be used to make new plants.

Planting time

If water is available either through well distributed rainfall or irrigation, the crop can be planted any time of the year.

If possible, at the beginning of the warm season since growth slows in cold weather.

Use cuttings from healthy strong cassava plants between 8 to 18 months since younger materials tend to be soft and susceptible to dehydration. Apply manure or compost to supply the important nutrients that are lacking.

Fertilizer Application

Apply fertilizers either organic i.e manure or compost or inorganic i.e myriad or potash so as to supply nutrients that are lacking in the soil.

Pests and diseases like the mosaic disease, cassava leaf spot etc can be controlled by using disease free sticks when planting. When harvesting, use cassava stem to lift from the ground using hands. Pull the plant carefully and do not drag the roots.