Reviving soils with Mucuna

Intercropping with Mucuna has a lot of benefits. It makes sure that the soil is fertilized and has nitrogen. Furthermore the legume Mucuna covers and protects the soil and makes sure that your yield will be good even in the following years.

Often farmers plant cassava between maize and at the beginning of the rainy season. Many farmers plant another maize crop in the second wet season. The problem with this second season is that you never now how much it actually will rain and therefore risk that you will have very little or no yields at all. If the same crops are planted again and again the soil becomes poor and tired and the land isn‘t fertilized anymore. This will cause, that even in the in the main season the yield suffers.

About Mucuna

Mucuna is a legume crop, exactly like cowpeas and beans, that can receive nitrogen from the air. The most of this nitrogen gets to the leaves and grains. If the plant is harvested, the most of the stored nitrogen will be put away from the field.

But Mucuna grain isn‘t easy to eat for peoples, for the reason of its many leaves and because the grains stay leftover on the field and fertilizes it. Mucuna covers the soil with its creeping vines and therefore helps to destroy many different weeds like Imperata and Striga.

The way to sow maize and Mucuna

Mucuna grows between maize rows in the main rainy season. To make sure that the planting is more easy, plant maize in rows. Therefore, leave 80 centimetres between the rows and 40 centimetres between the plants. Ropes that have marked the distances help you. Make two planting seeds in every planting

hole. To protect the maize from repression, you shouldn‘t start growing mucuna in the first 60 days. Before planting Mucuna, water the maize field.

Sow about 60 kilogram Mucuna seeds per hectar to make sure that most of the soil will be covered. Put two Mucuna seeds per hill every 40 centimetres between the maize rows.

After the maize harvest, Mucuna will continue to grow for a while until the end of the rain season. The thick layer of Mucuna mulch is going to decompose and helps the soil to keep it moist. Depending on how much weed has grown, you should sow the new maize seeds into the Mucuna mulch instead of ploughing the field.