Striga biology

Striga is a dangerous weed, especially for your cereal crops. It damages your yield and can destroy the harvest. Therefore, it is important to know exactly how to destroy and fight against striga.

Weed steals water, light and nutrients from crops. Striga is one of the most destroying weeds when it comes to sorghum, millets and maize. You can recognize it, because of its red flowers in eastern and southern Africa an its purple flowers across Africa. Both varieties have the same properties.

Life course of striga

Striga is a parasite weed which sucks water and nutrients from cereal crops and likes to grow on poor soils. The weed cannot be reproduced with the roots, but over the seeds. One striga plant is able to produce thousands of seeds. This seeds are so small that they aren‘t recognizable for many farmers. They look like black dust and are in a pod which looks like weevils.

Young striga plants develop under the soil during up to seven weeks and appear after every other weed variety. Therefore by the first weeding striga sometimes is still missing.

Identifying striga

You have to identify striga before it starts to grow. If you allow striga to produce more seeds you have to handle it in the following year as well. Different from other weeds, striga appears as a batch near sorghum plants, because it can attach on sorghum roots.

Striga doesn‘t attack every crop. “Trap crops“ like cotton, tobacco, sesame, cowpea and groundnuts are not attacked by it. Striga will sprout next to them, but isn‘t able to enter the

roots and therefore dies.

Working together

The parasite weed can be easily transmitted by wind, water, livestock and contaminated crop seeds. If you or your neighbours aren‘t killing the weed, you will have problems with it in the following years. You may be incapable to grow sorghum or millet. This shows that it is important to work with your neighbours to fight against striga.