

Vertical Column Vanilla Cultivation | Vanilla Farming Business Plan

Vanilla is valued all over the world for its profitability. Vanilla extract is the second most valuable spice after saffron and its the world's most popular flavour.

Vertical column vanilla cultivation involves a more intensive cultivation under shade structures which increases yields. Trellis support systems vary greatly but are generally made of vertical wood or concrete support with a wire running between them. Supports are usually no more than two metres tall to facilitate pollination once vines mature. Vines will need to be maintained on 15-20 cm or 6-8 inches of mulch substrate.

Propagation method

Vanilla is primarily propagated by cuttings. Let the cut sites heal prior to planting by leaving fresh cuttings at room temperature under low light for 1-2 days. Cuttings can be placed directly on top of the growth substrate mulch from various sources as soon as cut sites have healed.

Misting helps vines retain leaves support rapid development of new roots and shoots. The apical end of longer cuttings can be tied to a support post with one to two nodes in contact with substrate.

Tissue culture

Tissue culture plants take 3-4 years to mature and flower. Tissue culture plants received in enclosed containers will need to be hardened in soilless mix under humidity domes and bright indirect light for a few weeks before they can survive in an environment with lower humidity.

Spacing and production

Vanilla vines require trellising to maximize production. Two major production methods are used. One uses tutor trees to provide both shade and a suitable structure on which the vines can climb.

Spacing recommendations are to plant vines at 1-3 metres apart with 2.5-3 metres between rows. An estimated 1000 plants per acre is often used for establishing commercial vanilla.