

Cassava

#4



Botanical name: **Manihot esculenta**

Common name: **Cassava**

Tongan name: **Manioke**

Other names:

DESCRIPTION & USES

Scientific name - *Manihot esculenta*, Tongan name - *Manioke*

Cassava is an important staple food in Tonga, grown widely as a subsistence crop. It ranks low in consumer preferences, reflected in low prices for cassava in the domestic market relative to other staples. In the 1993 Land Use and Crops survey, it was found cassava was most grown crop occupying 6541 acres, which is 25 percent of total cropped area. The leaves and roots of cassava are important source of animal feed. Cassava is generally the last crop in the cropping cycle, following the yam crop and subsequent taro and sweet potato crops. It is frequently planted twice in succession in the same plot, after which the land is left fallow.



KINGDOM OF TONGA



Cassava

PRODUCTION NOTES

Climate: This crop prospers with a well-distributed annual rainfall of at least 500 mm. It is relatively drought tolerant.

Soil: Although cassava can be grown on a wide range of soils, it is susceptible to poor drainage. If grown in the same ground too frequently without the use of fertiliser it depletes the soil of nutrients, making the land unsuitable for other crops.



Propagation: Planting materials are 30 cm long stem cuttings taken from 8-10 month old plants.

Planting density: Cassava is normally grown at a rate of around 4000 plants/ac (i.e., a spacing of 1.0 m x 1.0 m).

Planting time: Cassava can be planted all year round, but best months are August to November.

Intercropping: Cassava is commonly grown as a mono-crop, planted immediately after the previous crop has been harvested, although it may be planted while the previous crops remain in the ground. It is sometimes grown as an intercrop with crops such as pineapples, vanilla, kava and corn.

Growth period: Cassava can be harvested after 8-15 months, or left unharvested for up to 2 years.

Storage: Once harvested, the cassava roots begin to deteriorate in only a few hours. They can be stored in the ground for two years or more.

Marketing notes:

Cassava is the cheapest of the root crops with an average domestic price of T\$1.18/kg (Talamahu Market Reports, 2019-2025). In the last seven years, about 20,144 tonnes of frozen cassava were exported annually.

For more information

Address: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF)