

Inoculation of Legumes

Inoculation is the process of adding rhizobia inoculant to the seed. It is important for farmers to ensure that they inoculate their crops properly so that they can enjoy the benefits of inoculation.

Please take note of the Following:

- You must use the correct inoculant for the correct crops. Do not use soybean inoculant on sugar beans because they may not be host specific or compatible.
- Note the expiry date of the inoculant and do not use the inoculant after 6 months of manufacture. Read the label to know the date of manufacture and date of expiry of the inoculant.
- Always note the batch number and lot number for quality control and feedback in case of any challenges e.g. inoculant does not work.
- Always observe all instructions during the inoculation.
- Observe necessary storage conditions. The inoculant is not supposed to be left in a hot vehicle or in the sun. Do not expose the inoculant to temperatures that are above 40°C Always remember: The inoculant has LIVING RHIZOBIUM BACTERIA.
- Observe the net weight of the inoculant and the amount of seed that is supposed to be inoculated. Do not exceed the recommended weight of the seed per inoculant sachet.
- Inoculation is supposed to be done in a cool place away from sunlight.
- You must plant soon after inoculation. Do not exceed 24 hours before you plant the inoculated seed.
- You must always plant the inoculated seed in a moist soil.
- Do not mix the inoculated seed with fertilizer because the fertilizer may denature the bacteria. At planting the inoculated seed should also not get in contact with fertilizers. Do not treat the seed with a fungicide or insecticide after inoculation.

Inoculation Method

1. Spread the seed out on a clean plastic sheet or in a large container.
2. Mix 1 litre of water with 50 grams sugar to make a sugar solution in a clean bucket. The use sugar is to enable the inoculant to stick to seed.
3. Pour the inoculant into the bucket with sugar solution. Make sure that all the inoculant is poured into the bucket. (Do not leave some inoculant in the sachet after opening. Use all of it at once.
4. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon for 30 seconds.

5. Sprinkle the inoculant mix onto the seed.
6. Do not use a lot of water on the seed because this can result in the outer coat of the seeds peeling off.
7. Turn the seed gently. When the seed is gently coated it will look shiny.

The inoculated seed is ready for planting and it may be allowed to dry in a cool shaded place.

Sow seed in a moist soil and cover immediately afterwards to protect the rhizobium from sunlight.