

# FOOD AND COMMERCIAL CROPS

## Major Crops

India is the second largest producer of rice in the world. Rice is a kharif crop that requires a high temperature and humidity and more than 100 cm of rainfall for proper growth. Wheat is a rabi crop that requires cool weather for growth and warm weather for ripening with 50 to 75 cm of rainfall.

Maize is majorly a kharif crop and grows well in old alluvial soils at moderate temperature from 21 to 27 degrees Celsius.

Food grains, like jowar, bajra and ragi, are together called coarse grains or

millets. Coarse grains are also used as animal feed. Jowar, also called sorghum, is the third most important food grain grown in India. This is a rain-fed crop that requires little or no irrigation.

Bajra grows well in shallow black soils and sandy soils of Rajasthan. Finger millet or ragi is known for its high nutritional value. Ragi grows well in almost all types of soils, like red, black, sandy or loamy soil.

Pulses are hardy crops that grow well in dry weather and are grown in rotation with other crops. This is because the roots of all pulses, have nitrogen-fixing nodules that help restore soil fertility.

India is the second largest producer of sugarcane in the world. Sugarcane grows in many different kinds of soils. The crop takes almost a year to mature and requires

a hot, humid climate with around 75 to 100 cm of rainfall. Groundnut, coconut, mustard, sesame, soybean, linseed, and castor, cotton and sunflower seeds are major oilseeds cultivated in India.

Groundnut is a kharif crop, while linseed and mustard are rabi crops. Castor seeds are grown in both the rabi and kharif seasons. Sesame is a rabi crop in southern India and a kharif crop in northern India. Groundnut requires accounts for about 50% of the total oilseeds produced in India.

Tea and coffee are beverage crops grown as plantation crops. A tea plant is a bush that grows in deep, fertile, well-drained soil and requires warm and humid climate with frequent showers for continuous growth.

The Arabica variety of coffee grown in India is appreciated the world over for its superior quality. India ranks first in the production of fruits and vegetables in the world. Latex and is derived from a non-food plantation crop called rubber. Rubber trees grow well in regions with hot and humid climate and over 200 cm of rainfall every year.

While cotton, jute and hemp are grown as fibre crops, silk is obtained from cocoons of silkworms fed on mulberry leaves.

Cotton grows well in the black soil of the Deccan Plateau and is a kharif crop which requires a high temperature and light rainfall or irrigation for proper growth. Jute grows well on fertile well-drained soils in regions where flood waters renew the topsoil every year. The crop requires a high temperature for proper growth.

