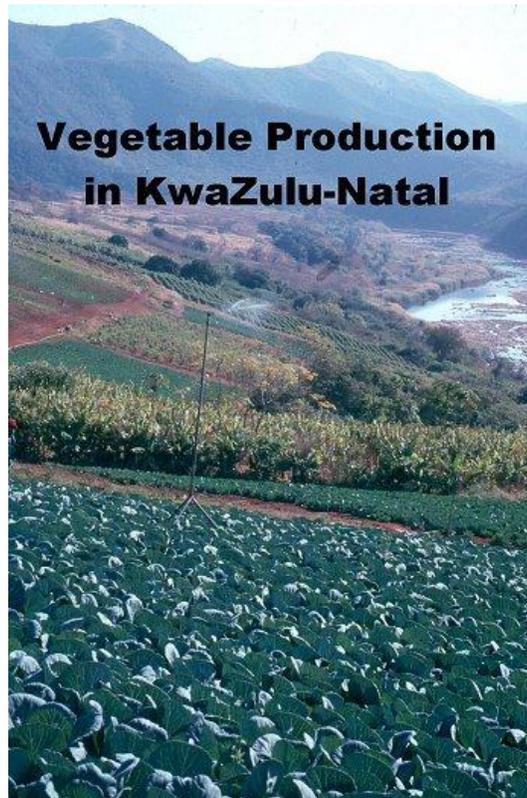




agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL



These guidelines have been compiled with the primary objective of supplying relevant information to commercial growers on the more important vegetable crops. These crops, as well as a few of lesser importance, are dealt with individually in the second section, entitled "Specific Crops".

However, in the first, or "General" section, much of the information provided pertains to vegetable crops in general, and specific information on climatic requirements, sowing times, seeding rates, spacings, and so on, of many other vegetable crops, is provided.

It is realised that this booklet will be of interest to small-scale producers, as well as to larger-scale commercial farmers. In the text, items such as plant populations, seeding rate, fertilizer rates and yields, are given per hectare. This can be confusing to those growing on areas smaller than one hectare. However, the conversion of these figures for use on smaller areas is quite easy, given that one hectare is 10 000 square metres (m^2), one ton is 1000 kg and one kg is 1000 g.

Thus a population of 40 000 plants per hectare is equivalent to 40 000 plants divided by 10 000 m^2 (1 ha), i.e. 4 plants per one m^2 , or 40 plants for 10 m^2 . A fertilizer rate of 200 kg (or 200 000g) per hectare is thus 200 000 g divided by 10 000 m^2 , i.e. 20 g per m^2 , or 200 g per 10 m^2 . Other rates can be calculated in a similar fashion.

Most growers in KZN, both large and small, tend to purchase plants grown in seedling trays from commercial seedling nurseries. The resultant crop from such plants is generally superior to that produced from plants raised in open seedbeds. However, the cost of such plants is, with the exception of crops where high-priced hybrid seed is used, usually higher, so that some growers are returning to the concept of producing their own plants, often in open seedbeds. Cultivars mentioned are amongst those which are currently popular with growers in KwaZulu-Natal.