

Kenaf Partners USA [™]

2368 N. Palmer Rd., Onaway, Michigan 49765
bob@kenafpartnersusa.com

Kenaf Seed Growing Pilot Program 2019

Labeling, Growing, Harvesting and Reporting Instructions

These instructions are specific to our growing for seed during the 2019 season. I have not read any other research that grows for seed this way. These instructions are based on multiple resources, observations, patterns and my conclusions.

Start a log book- This will become a valuable tool for you and each of us and provide accurate information for your report submissions. Get in the habit of putting something in your log book every day, even if it is only the weather you log. Your log book must have the planting dates, watering dates, germination/sprouting counts by dates and variety, the date(s) the tops are cut off, flowering dates, harvesting seed dates and include the dates you send reports.

Spacing -The growing space for each seed/plant is 36 inches by 36 inches. This may be more than enough, yet I don't know of any plant doing poorly because they had too much space. On the contrary, too little space to grow (as prescribed by certain "Best Practices") causes problems and we cannot afford to take risks with the few seeds we have to start with.

When and How Deep - Plant as soon as possible after the last frost date when soil temperature is minimally 60F in moist soil ¼ inch deep. Seeds need to be planted where the tap root can grow as deep into the ground as it can, to find water. Think large scale commercial farming. We need to know what the plant will do under these circumstances.

Labeling- It is vital that you keep track of the different varieties and each plant gets its' own label. There may come a point when you will want to take a photo and having a label that is easy read from the photo. Like black on white background. It doesn't matter what colors are used or material used if it is easily read from a photo.

Germination- Kenaf seeds usually germinate in 2-4 days. Since we will be getting seed varieties we haven't grown before and some of them may take longer. Starting 2 days after planting begin counting the number of seeds that have sprouted for each variety. Continue your

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counting for days 3-10. At the end of 10 days total up the number of sprouts for each variety and send your report to bob@kenafpartnersusa.com

Watering- Depending on weather you may need to give each plant the water it needs to get established. Once you feel the plant is established (usually around 2 weeks after sprouting) only water when plants look stressed (wilted leaves, leaves become dull instead of shiny). Kenaf is drought tolerant but needs water to grow. The idea is not to pamper the plants, so they grow up strong. Get them to grow their roots deep to find the water they need. This will help them develop strong offspring/seeds with more vitality.

Frost- In the event an unpredicted frost is expected in the weather forecast you will need to be prepared to protect each plant. A frost will kill the plant.

Preparing for Seed Production- When your plants are 4 feet tall you will need to cut the top one foot of the plant off. What you do with the top piece is up to you. If your kenaf plants are in the 55-60 days after sprouting you might want to taste the bottom and top leaves (to compare taste) as this is usually the sweet spot for taste and nutrition. This is also the time when deer etc. will want to eat the leaves. Cutting the top will promote branching and more seed production. Report the start and finish date(s) when completed and send to:

bob@kenafpartnersusa.com

Flowering- Flowering begins when the plants reach their maturity. Kenaf is indeterminate meaning they flower and fruit at different times. Each flower lasts for one day and then drops and begins to grow seed pods. Report the start and finish date(s) when completed and send to: bob@kenafpartnersusa.com

Seed Pods- Seeds take about 3 weeks to form and mature in the pods. The seeds are mature and ready for harvest when you can hear the seeds when you shake the pod.

Harvesting- This may be a daily project for about 2 weeks. You will need to wear good protection especially gloves. The mature pods have sharp spiny needles. Harvest each variety separately so they don't get mixed in with other varieties. Since you will be harvesting by hand

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the first year, how you go about this is up to you. Count the number of seeds for each variety and log it. Place harvested seeds in dry sealed containers that are labeled with the variety name. Repurposed mayonnaise or pickle jars may work for you. Report the start and finish date(s) when completed along with each variety seed count and send to:

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If you wish to report anything in addition to the above, or have questions please send to:

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