Controlling weeds in upland rice

Recognize the problem
Weeds are unwanted plants growing among the rice plants. Some are similar to the rice plant and others are different (they may have broad leaves). Weeds grow faster than the rice. The weeds compete with the rice plants for nutrients, water and sunlight and also act as a host for other pests and diseases. The weeds slow the growth of the rice resulting in low yields.

Background
Little time is needed for weeds to germinate after planting rice. It is easier to remove weeds when they have started to grow a little taller but before the roots are well developed. It is also easy to remove weeds when the soil is damp or soft.

Management
- Prepare the land well by brushing, clearing, ploughing and harrowing to reduce the weed population in the future.
- Remove weed seeds from the rice seeds before planting. This can be done using a sieve with small holes - weed seeds will drop through the holes because they are smaller than rice seeds.
- Select healthy and viable rice seeds before planting.
- Weed 4-6 weeks after planting rice.
- Remove uprooted weeds from the farm or put in a pile for compost.
- Weed when the soil is damp to make the job easier.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Sierra Leone