

Managing yellow nutsedge in maize

Recognize the problem

Yellow nutsedge (*indao* in Bemba) is a weed. Its stems are erect, triangular shaped and yellow green. Leaves are also yellow green and about 1 cm wide. When un-controlled, it grows quickly and uses most of the nutrients needed by the maize. Such maize plants may have thin stems and have stunted growth. Yields will be reduced.

Background

Yellow nutsedge is a weed that spreads mostly through underground stems. It usually grows in water-soaked soils. It is difficult to manage because the nuts underground survive the dry season and do not die even after applying herbicides to the plant. Managing this weed is essential for good yields.

Management

- Plough and harrow the land before planting to expose nuts, which are killed by the sun
- Level the land well before planting to prevent waterlogging which yellow nutsedge needs for good growth
- Plant maize in rows at spacing of 75 cm (between rows) by 30 cm (between plants in the same row). When maize grows well, it shades the yellow nutsedge, which slows its growth. Mixing maize with crops like beans, cowpea, or pumpkins, also shades the nutsedge and slows its growth.
- Spray glyphosate directly onto the young nutsedge plants before planting the maize. Spraying onto the ground does not help. Repeat sprays to achieve good results. Sprays must only be used before the maize emerges, otherwise you will kill the maize crop.
- Start weeding early, 3 to 4 weeks from the planting date. This destroys young yellow nutsedge plants and prevents them from growing older and producing nuts.

Nutsedge flower. (Photo by Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service, CC BY)



Small round tubers also called nuts of nutsedge. (Photo by Joseph M. DiTomaso, University of California – Davis, CC BY-NC)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Cyperus esculentus*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Zambia



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