

Land preparation and soil requirements for *Jatropha curcas* plantation

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Jatropha curcas prefers soils with good drainage system with an open well-aerated structure. Most suitable soils are loam, sandy clay loam and silt loam. Heavy soils (clay, sandy clay, clay loam, silty clay loam, and silt) are only suitable under relatively dry conditions when frequent periods of heavy rainfall are absent. *Jatropha* cannot tolerate permanent wetness (it becomes waterlogged). Heavy soils, therefore, are only suitable when they are not saturated with moisture for long periods. On sandy soils this crop has a comparative advantage over other crops, because it is drought tolerant, but in these soils it will need fertilization or high organic matter application. On hard or compacted soils, ploughing or deep ripping is advisable; a deep ripper should rip from 30-50 cm depth. This will allow root system of seedlings to develop well. Holes for *Jatropha* planting should ideally have special dimensions i.e. diameter of 30 cm and depth of 45 cm. The holes should be refilled with compost in a ratio 1:1 i.e. 0.5 kg per hole.