bunching onion seed production

jw seeds

Stock seed

Receiving of seed no later than middle of November.

Sowing period

End of November to early January depending on variety. Sowing of seeds can either be done in a well-prepared seedbed using a fine seed planter or in a nursery in seed trays. In nurseries, seedlings would normally be ready for transplant after 7-8 weeks compared to a seedbed where 10-12 weeks are needed.

Nursery

Being in a protected and controlled environment, growing seedlings in a nursery is more successfull especially taking in to consideration the extreme summer weather conditions of the sowing period. However, a well managed seedbed can be equally successfull and more cost effective.

Field information

Transplanting of seedlings occur during middle March to April. Plant population is 250,000 - 400,000 plants/ha depending on variety. Production can be done on either drip-, flood- or overhead irrigation.

Disease & pest control

Thrips control after transplanting is of utmost importance. Powdery mildew can occur in areas with mild winter climate, whereas Botrytis and Alternaria can occur later in the growing season. Special attention is also needed to prevent practices that will negatively influence bee activity as bees are important for good pollination and seed set.

J.W.SEEDS · JOHAN VD WESTHUIZEN & SEUNS

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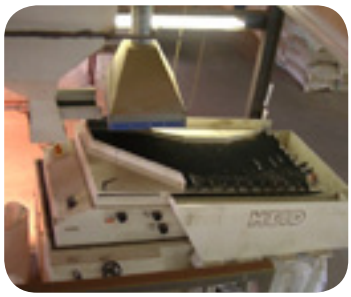
Seed harvesting

Depending on variety a bunching onion plant can produce on average 2-4 seedstalks per plant per season. Flowering can be as early as middle September and can continue untill middle January. The harvesting process is therefore continuous over a period of 2-3 months. It is done by hand and starts as early as beginning of October. Harvesting plays an important role in the seed quality.

Seed conditioning

Harvested umbels are moved from the field for drying. Umbels are dried either artificially or naturally in drying sheds and takes anything from 2-4 weeks depending on method used. Growers pre-clean seed on the farm with suitable equipment before it is transported to the JW Seed Cleaning facility in Oudtshoorn for final processing and packaging.



Seed yield

Bunching onion can be divided in 3 groups of varieties in terms of yield:
1) Late Bolters: requires a longer and colder period to reproduce. Yield potential is 400 to 500kg/ha.
2) Medium Bolters: 600 to 800kg/ha
3) Early Bolters: the most common group with an average potential of 800 to 1200kg/ha.

Purity and germination

Seed lots are analysed for purity (~100%) and germination (>85%) at the official laboratory in Oudtshoorn.

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