

# The Ultimate Guide to Passion Fruit Growing Business

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## Introduction

Over the past few months, you may have heard some chatter about the immense benefits of growing passion fruit. Not surprising.

According to [Softkenya](#), passion fruit is third most popular fruit in Kenya after mangoes and bananas respectively, and this enterprise already boasts an area of 6000 hectares under production. Passion fruit is only growing in popularity as the hottest new gold mine, and that's why in 2010, passion fruit made Hit Wise's list of the top most lucrative [fruit ventures](#) in Kenya, currently sitting at #3 and beating out big names like papaya and avocados.



Juicy ripe passion fruit

And as with any hot new enterprise that comes onto the scene, farmers and gardeners are chiming in with, "Can I use it for income generation?" "...and, how?"

The short answer? Absolutely. The longer answer? Read on to find out how.

## Growing passion fruit step by step

Passion fruit is a perennial plant that allows farmers to enjoy yields for longer periods often exceeding three years depending on management. As with most other fruits, you can intercrop passion fruit with **vegetables** such as leeks, onions, beetroots, spinach, strawberries and any other crop that does not share **pest and diseases** with the passions.

Popular cultivars include purple passion fruit and yellow passion fruit.

### The purple passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis f. edulis*)

Suitable for areas with an altitude of 1100 to 2500m above sea level. The fruit has an aromatic flavor with a diameter of 4-5 cm.

**Who are the consumers?** Fresh markets and juice extractors

Purple form (Varieties)– Black night, Edgehill, Frederick, Kahuna, Paul Ecke, Purple Giant, Red Rover

### Yellow passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis f. flavicarpa*)

Yellow passion fruit is suitable for low altitudes such as coastal lowlands. It's more hardy and vigorous as compared to the purple passion. The fruit is bigger with a diameter of 5-7 cm, relatively acidic and used for juice extraction.

Of course, it's also yellow, ha.

More fundamentally, yellow passion fruit is used as a rootstock to purple passion fruit since it's resistant to most **diseases** affecting the passion fruits such as *Phytophthora* blight, *Fusarium*, wilt, brown spot, and nematodes.

Yellow form – Brazilian golden, golden giant.

## Soil Preparation and Planting

I'm assuming that you have already plowed and harrowed your soil to a fine texture. I'm also assuming that you have a very clear **plan of your yard** depending on the size

of your land. Next you need to sterilize the soil since passion fruits are very sensitive to nematodes and other disease-causing agents such as *Fusarium sp.*

There are several ways for you to choose from when it comes to soil sterilization

1. You can use fumigation method and
2. Solarisation

Of course, there are many more other ways. Please feel free to use them. In this case, I'm going to focus on one that is cheap, economical and efficient – Solarisation

### **How to sterilize the soil using solarisation method**

- Wet the ground that you intend to grow the passions into – this ensures that the heat reaches lower horizons
- Cover the soil entirely with a polythene paper
- Leave it there for at least a week

Assumption: You have at least five to seven hours of sunshine a day.

After this period elapses, remove the polythene and inoculate the area with the beneficial microorganism. The popular brand is the **EM.1 found on amazon** and shipped anywhere for free by **Amazon.com**. This is because solarisation kills all micro-organism (both harmful and beneficial ones). I will address this topic in details in the future articles.

Good job! Your soil is now safe for growing passion fruits.

The best way to get good results is by growing your purple passion fruit from grafted seedlings. Yellow passion fruits serve as rootstalk.

Plant the seedlings at a reasonable depth and recommended spacing for your area. While doing this, ensure that the graft union is not covered by the soil to avoid rotting. Remember to water the newly planted seedlings before you call it a day.

## **Crop management**

After 1-2 weeks, it is expected that the seedlings have acclimatized to their new environment, and therefore, you should start seeing some remarkable changes in growth. This only marks the beginning of more work to come.

And yes, it's general crop management.

Growing passion fruits require some basic necessities; for example, feeding, and crop protection. The most important management practices will entail;

1. Water application in the right proportions (Avoid under-watering or over-watering).
2. Application of necessary nutrients in the form of fertilizers and foliar sprays (Always conduct periodical soil analysis to determine which nutrient elements needs supplementing). - Too much or too little nutrients might actually injure your plants.
3. Periodical soil conditioning, for example, addition of compost and organic materials
4. Weeding – or mulching with a polythene that suppresses weeds
5. Frequent monitoring of the crop for pest and diseases and taking the necessary precautions (Use a holistic approach or Integrated Pest Management strategies to combat pest and diseases). It is also worth noting that in case you have to spray, use only recommended pesticides and observe Minimum Residue Levels (MRLs).

## **Support and training**

If you've done all your homework up to this point, your young plants should be growing more and more vigorously. You'll realize this when you see dense foliage and emergence of tendrils. (*Tendrils are rope-like structures used by passion vines to*

*support themselves against other objects).*



### Flowering Purple Passion Fruit

Tendrils are an indication that your plants need support. You can support your passion fruit seedlings by erecting poles and some strong ropes or wires. Personally, I'd go for meshed wires – they do an excellent job!

Once you've put the support structure in place, it's time to guide the growth of those plants along the support. In a nutshell, guiding your passion seedlings to grow in the desired way is what we call training. We don't want the fruits lying on the ground.

### **Maturity and Harvesting**

For most **beginners**, this is where the dilemma starts. How do you tell when your passion fruits have matured? How do you know when to start harvesting?

You don't have to know!

Unlike other fruits that need an understanding of maturity indices, passion fruits are different. Once they attain a proper physiological maturity, they detach from the mother plant and falls on the ground. Now, all you have to do is get a crate and pick them one by one. This can be done twice a day depending on their volume. Just make sure you don't leave them too long on the ground.

## Packing and packaging

How do present your precious produce to your consumer? The answer to this question will differentiate you from your competition. Think deeply about your brand and communicate it through your packaging. You've worked so hard to feed the world don't lose the opportunity to reap big by failing to pay attention to your presentation. Keep in mind that whatever packaging material you chose;

- It has to contain your produce
- Communicate and
- Protect your produce

## The business side of growing passion fruit

Incorporating Passions into your farming venture might seem like a great opportunity for your business, but you need to make sure it's generating results to make it worth your time and effort. Whenever possible, include a well-detailed business plan and a proper statement of inflows and outflows to give you a sense of direction. Keep track of expenditures and income generated from your venture.

To start you off, this is how your income statement should look.

### Income Statement per acre (passion fruit)

<b>Production system (rain-fed)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Output (kg)	7,360	20,200	15,000
Farm-gate price (KES/kg)	30.00	30.00	30.00
Gross Revenue (KES/Acre)	220,800	606,000	450,000



<b>Cost of Production (KES)</b>			
<b>Crop establishment</b>			
Grafted seedlings (670@40)	26,800	0.00	0.00
Posts (350@150)	52,000	0.00	0.00
Wires 120kgs@150	18,000	0.00	0.00
Sisal twines 110kgs@200	20,000	0.00	0.00
Planting holes 670@10	6,700	0.00	0.00
Manure 14tonnes	10,000	0.00	0.00
Labour cost	20,000	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Establishment Cost</b>	<b>154,000</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Crop Inputs</b>			
Weeding	9,000	9,000	9,000
Spraying	7,750	7,750	0.00
CAN	3,200	6,400	6,400
DAP/TSP 130kgs/Acre	10,400	2,500	0.00
Foliar feeds	1,250	2,500	3,150
Insecticides	2,450	3,000	3,000

Fungicides	8,450	8,450	8,450
Harvesting	3,500	3,500	3,500
Other Costs	1,660	2,410	2,150
<b>Total Crop Input Cost</b>	<b>47,660</b>	<b>45,150</b>	<b>35,650</b>
<b>Total Costs of Production</b>	<b>201,660</b>	<b>45,150</b>	<b>35,650</b>
<b>Profit (KES/Acre)</b>	<b>19,140</b>	<b>560,850</b>	<b>414,350</b>
Cost of production (KES/Kg)	10.56	4.01	4.96
Margins (KES/Kg)	2.60	25.99	25.04

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## Conclusion

You have learned how growing passion fruit can be an excellent income generator in the long run.

As you have seen, an acre can give you close to KES 1,000,000 (\$10,000) in 3 years. But depending on your ability to follow the due process and all the **recommendations**, the results can be varied.

I have done my part and guarantee that growing passion fruit for money is not only a hype but a genuine agribusiness. Now it's your turn to give it a try and thank me later.

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