

# SWEETPOTATO TRIPLE S – AN OVERVIEW

## What is Triple S?

Triple S stands for Sand, Storage and Sprouting which are the 3 main steps used for storing sweetpotato roots to conserve planting materials during the dry season.

The roots are stored in coarse dry sand, and then planted out and watered before the rains arrive so their sprouts can grow and provide planting materials at the start of the rains.



## Why use Triple S?

The shortage of planting materials at the start of the rains, is a major challenge to sweetpotato farming across sub-Saharan Africa.

Access to planting materials at the start of the rains, would enable households to plant a larger area of sweetpotato and to start harvesting a few roots within 3 months to help nourish them during the period of the year when many households are hungry.

Using Triple S can help in many ways, as:

- Triple S provides sweetpotato planting materials at the start of the rains
- Planting sweetpotato early provides food during the hungry season
- Sweetpotato roots harvested early in the season fetch a high price at market
- Sweetpotato yields and areas are increased
- Sweetpotato is a low cash input crop, Triple S helps resource-poor households harvest sufficient food
- Households do not have to spend time searching for vines
- Sweetpotato is relatively drought tolerant helping to provide food in increasingly unpredictable climatic conditions.

## Equipment needed:



Old **basin**, or other container for storing the roots in



Old **newspaper** for lining the basin



**Coarse, dry, cool sand** – which can be swept from the yard



Small to medium-sized undamaged **sweetpotato roots**



Sticks to peg plants



Fork hoe to harvest roots



Watering can

## Triple S calculations:

One Triple S root planted out and watered for 6-8 weeks will generate ~40 cuttings.

A Triple S basin that holds ~50 roots will generate ~2,000 cuttings 6-8 weeks after planting out.

Three cuttings are planted per square metre. So, 2,000 cuttings are sufficient to plant an area of ~650 m<sup>2</sup> (~0.15 of an acre).

Then 1 month later, the vines in the root bed can be harvested a second time, providing another 2,000 cuttings, enabling an additional 0.15 acre to be planted or the cuttings can be sold.

**So 1 Triple S basin of ~50 roots can provide enough cuttings to plant 0.25 acre.**

## Triple S activity timing and calendar

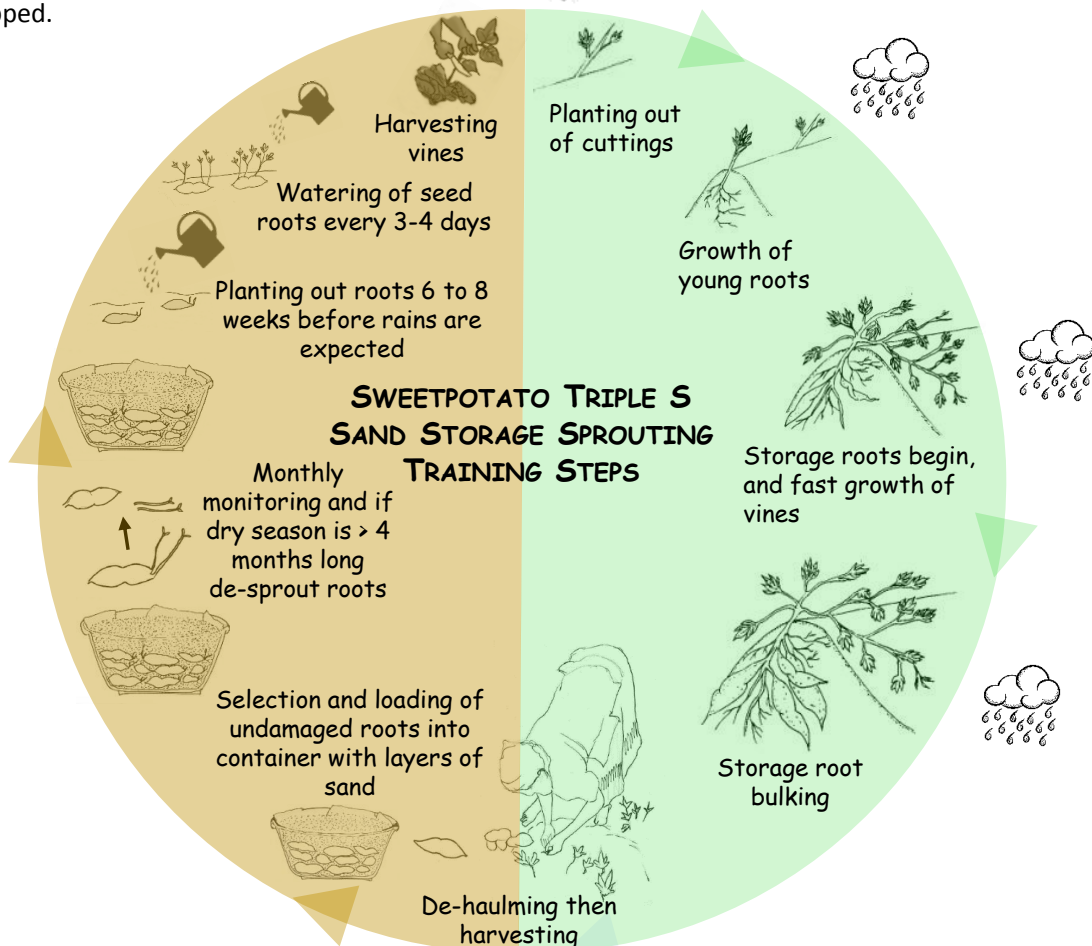
**Before harvest:** healthy sweetpotato plants are pegged, and then de-haulmed/ de-topped.

**At harvest:** the undamaged small-medium sized roots are selected and used to set-up the Triple S.

**After harvest:** Triple S is monitored monthly, and if dry season is >4 months long de-sprouting is done.

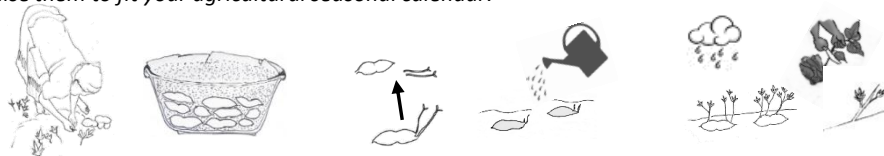
**6-8 weeks prior to rains:** root bed is prepared and Triple S roots planted and watered twice weekly.

**At start of rains:** vines are harvested from the Triple S roots.



### TRIPLE S CALENDAR EXAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Remember Triple S timing is driven by the rains, not by calendar dates so the below are just examples, and you will need to contextualise them to fit your agricultural seasonal calendar.



Location [add your timings]	Harvesting, root selection & storage of Triple S roots	Dry-season period [months], monitoring	De-sprout roots	Planting out in root bed & water every 3-4 days (6-8 weeks before rains)	Start of rains. Vine harvesting & planting of cuttings every 4 weeks from:
Mozambique	Apr/ May	Jun to Sept [3]	No need	Oct to Nov	Jan/ Feb
Kenya -Western	July/ August	Sept to Jan [5]	Oct/Nov	Feb/March	April
Uganda -Northern	Nov/Dec	mid Nov to Mar [4]	No need	mid Jan/ Feb	mid Mar/Apr
Ethiopia -Tigray	Oct/Nov	Oct to Jun [9]	Jan and Apr	May/ June	Jun/Jul
-SNNPR - Belg	Oct/Nov	Oct to Feb [4]	No need	February	Mar/April
-SNNPR - Meher	Oct	Oct to Apr [9]	Jan/Feb	March	Apr/May
Nigeria -Derived savannah	Oct/ Nov	Nov to Apr [6]	No need	February	Apr/May
Burkina Faso -Western	Oct - Dec	Nov to Mar [5]	Dec/Jan	April	June/ July