

Striga witchweed in cowpea

Striga gesneroides Kaufi Wa Khobwe Wa Maluwa Ofira



Striga weed grows up to 10-20 cm high (IITA)



Parasitic striga weed attached to, and penetrating the crop root (Rob Williams/CABI)



Early drying of cowpea because of striga weed (IITA)

Prevention	Monitoring	Direct Control	Direct Control	Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using seeds from the previous harvest if the crops were infested with Striga weed. • Intercrop with trap crops, like maize, pigeon pea, Mucuna, sorghum, cotton and soyabean to reduce the Striga seed bank in the soil. Striga seeds germinate, cannot attach itself to these crops, so it dies. • Rotate cowpea with non-susceptible crops, such as groundnuts for no less than 3 years as seeds stay long in the soil. • Apply organic or inorganic fertilizer (80kg of N/ha) to improve soil fertility for better crop health and better tolerance to weeds. • Avoid grazing animals or livestock in fields infested with Striga. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striga witchweed is a small parasitic plant that attaches to, and penetrates the root of cowpea. • Look for purplish flowering parasitic weed attached to the crop that grows up to 10-20 cm. The flowers are different from yellow flowering witchweed. • Look for yellowed cowpea leaves or early aging of cowpea plants in the field and search for presences of the Striga weed close to it. • Uprooting infested plants reveals the yellowish Striga root of 1-3 cm in diameter attaching to the plant. • Do regular plant monitoring and act as soon as possible before the weed flowers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-pull and rogue out Striga plants after its emergence. This should be done before the weed flowers and sets seed. • If you weed late and do not put them in your compost pile or pit, burn the collected plants to kill the seeds since seeds stay for a long time in the soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no silver bullet control methods for controlling Striga weed. Management of the weed mainly depends on the cultural practices listed in the prevention. Use of herbicides usually negatively affect the crops and are not advised. 	

