

Mint

Harvesting

The mint crop herbage is harvested when the field is dry and weather is bright and sunny. A simple way to judge the maturity is to see whether the lower leaves have started turning yellow or when the plant starts flowering.

The yellowness of lower leaves indicates that any further delay in harvesting may cause loss in the yield due to falling of the yellow leaves.

The usual method of harvesting consists of cutting the green herb by means of sickle from 2-3 cm above the ground.

The crop planted with stolons in January and February is harvested twice and that planted with seedlings during March and April is harvested once. The stolon planted crop is first harvested after 100-120 days of growth in the month of May. The second harvest is taken between 60-75 days following the first harvest. The transplanted mint crop is harvested in June or July.

Yield

The yield of herbage from a mint crop depends upon a number of factors. On an average, 20-25 tonnes of green herb per hectare can be obtained in three cuttings yielding 125-200 kg of oil/ha.

Uses

Menthol mint essential oil is the main source of natural menthol.

The dementholised oil (DMO) is reconstituted to produce oil similar to *Mentha piperita* oil. Several of the many dozens of terpenes present in the essential oil are valuable compounds that find uses in the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. Menthol itself is used as a flavouring agent mouth-related products such as fresheners, tooth pastes and chewing gums, etc. Menthol mint oil because of its antimicrobial properties enhances the shelf of edible products and grains. Menthol mint oil is an essential ingredient of the ointments, pain balms, lozenges and syrups. It is also used in cosmetic preparations, colognes, deodorants, cosmetics, etc. In India, menthol and mint oil are extensively used in betel (pan) related industries.