

## Cultural Practices

First irrigation may be given immediately after transplanting and another after 3-5 days.



Removal of weeds is essential. Weeding and hoeing are done to manage the weeds since plant is very slow to establish and does not compete well with weeds, herbicides application or other means is essential to control weed growth to produce economically beneficial yield and a clean crop.

## Harvesting and Drying

Harvesting is done manually leaving 8-10 cm stem height from ground level. First harvest is taken at flower bud initiation. Subsequently, second harvest is taken after 90 days of the first harvest. Drying of leaves depending on weather conditions and density of loading, it generally takes 24 to 48 hours to dry Stevia at 40°C to 50°C. It can be stored for longer periods in air-tight containers or plastic bags.



## Uses of Stevia

- Dried Green Stevia Leaves
- Green Powder of the Leaves  
(1 gram for one Cup Black Tea)
- White Stevioside Powder
- Stevioside Liquid



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## Stevia Cultivation



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## About Stevia

*Stevia rebaudiana* belongs to the Asteraceae family. This plant is mostly cultivated in tropical and subtropical countries of the world. It is commonly known as honey leaf, candy leaf and sweet leaf. Stevia leaves contain stevioside content which are Calorie free and used throughout the world due to their sweet taste. The stevioside content is 300 times sweeter than sugar. Stevia leaves are currently attractive alternative substitute for sugarcane and sugar beet.

### Stevia comparison with other sweeteners



## Advantages of Stevia as Sweetener

- Safe
- Non-toxic
- Zero calorie
- 100% natural sweetener
- Help in reducing blood pressure
- Control blood sugar levels



## Importance of Stevia

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have approved the use of Stevia as a food supplement in different countries including Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, South America, UK, United States etc. The economical and medicinal Importance of Stevia is due to the presence of stevioside



content. Diabetic and obese persons with hyperglycemia can use Stevia as alternate calorie free natural sweetener. It is used for the treatment of different diseases including cancer. Traditionally this plant is used for acidity, fever, tooth decay and dental caries. It is also used as strong antioxidant anti-pathogenic and anti-hypersensitive.

## Climate and Soil Conditions

Stevia is a semi-humid, subtropical plant and can grow in the temperature ranges between 04 - 48 °C and will also grow in cold climates with winter protection. It grows well in sandy loam soils with a pH range of 6.5-7.5.

## Propagation of Stevia

Stevia plants can be propagated through seeds or cuttings or by tissue culture.

Propagation from seeds is owing of the problem of low seed production and poor germination capacity. Select only black or dark seeds which are viable and tan or clear coloured seeds are generally infertile. Even black seeds lose viability quickly.

Since, seeds can be sown in raised nursery beds of size 1.25m x 10m having a 1:1:1 mixture of sand, soil and organic manure. Seeds germinated within 7-10 days. The nursery beds are irrigated daily both in the morning and evening during the first five days with sprinkler. Seeds are sown in November - December or in spring in a warm greenhouse and only just covered with compost shall

make sure that the compost does not dry out. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots and grow them till out planting after the last expected frosts. For vegetative propagation stem cutting of 6-8 inches of the current year growth have shown better results. In the month of October-November stevia cuttings treated with paclobutrazol (100 ppm) and IBA (500 ppm) is effective for root initiation.

