

Controlling weeds in a CA system-a quick guide:

1. Controlling weeds in a CA system is a continuous process. The idea is to never allow weeds to reach maturity and release seeds into the soil.
2. Immediately after harvesting slash any weeds and continue to do so during the dry season to prevent them from producing seeds.
3. To avoid soil disturbance, slash the weeds or spray them just before planting, and keep slashing them throughout the season whenever necessary. The strategy is to reduce and maintain the weed population at the lowest possible level (threshold) thereby making crop-weed competition for the crop to attain its yield potential.
4. Immediately afterwards, plant the main crop using any of the recommended methods under CA system.
5. After planting the main crop, plant a cover crop between the rows of the main crop.
6. Regularly check for weeds and control them by pulling them out, scraping the soil surface with an appropriate weeding hoe, weed scraper or using an animal-drawn shallow weeder, or by using a selective herbicides.
7. After harvesting the main crop, allow the cover crop to establish itself well so as to provide soil cover and smother any emerging weeds.
8. Continue checking for weeds and pull them out before they can flower and seed.
9. Manage the mixture of crop residue and cover crops using a sickle, machete, knife-roller or another implement 3 weeks before you expect to plant the next crop.

If the above process is carried out repeatedly, you will notice sharp reduction in weeds under the CA system. The few weeds that germinate will be easy to control by pulling them out.

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WEED CONTROL OPTIONS IN SMALLHOLDER CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA



Managing weeds in CA systems

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