



MILLET

Panicum miliaceum and Setaria italica

Millet is drought-tolerant and thrives in poor soils. The early-maturing, cooler-climate millets are easy to grow here. It provides high-quality protein, B vitamins, and minerals.

PLANTING

Millet requires well-drained soil. It is a warm-season crop and should be planted when soils are at least 60 degrees. Millet can also be grown as a transplant to get a jump on the season. We have direct seeded millet 1" apart in rows 6" apart and transplanted seedlings 6" apart in rows 12" apart (both methods worked fine). Millet can also be broadcast but weeding may prove more difficult.

GROWING METHODS

MAINTENANCE

Millet grows slowly during the first few weeks and must be kept well-weeded. We don't water our millet but if it is especially dry you may consider watering.

HARVEST

Millet matures from the top down. Harvest when the lower seeds are still a little green. Cut off the seed heads, leaving a foot or so of stem. Bundle into small shocks or spread out under cover to continue drying.

THRESHING

Millet threshes easily. Just bang the bundles against the inside of a large barrel or rub between gloved hands. Winnnow with a steady fan or use seed-cleaning screens.

PROCESSING

SEED-SAVING/STORAGE

Proso millet is a self-pollinating plant but up to 10% crossing has been observed. We cannot find any information on the breeding of Foxtail millet. Safest would be to grow only one variety of each to ensure seed purity. Simply collect seed, thoroughly dry, and store in an airtight container.

COOKING TIPS

Millet contains a hard hull that must be removed for whole grain use. "Homegrown Whole Grains" by Sara Plizer, has plans for a millet huller (we have not tried this yet). Millet can also be ground (hull on) into a flour for use in bread products.

YIELDS & LABOR

Millet is reported to yield 4-8 lbs per 100 SF. This is consistent with our own results. Total labor for this amount is approximately 2.5 hours.

BBGP RESEARCH

VARIETIES

None of the pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) we trialed matured. Three varieties of Proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) matured, as well as the one variety of foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*) we tried.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Millet tolerates poor and dry acidic soils.