

## PRACTICE ABSTRACT n° 4

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### Inter-cropping

Inter-cropping is the practice of growing two or more crops on the same plot of land at the same time. In addition to the advantage of farmers getting multiple crops from the same piece of land, inter-cropping helps maintain soil fertility and structure, reduces soil erosion and controls weeds. Inter-cropping utilizes resources efficiently, gives additional yield income/unit area than sole cropping and acts as an insurance against failure of crops in abnormal year. Inter-crops also provide shade and support to the other crop. To harness these benefits, inter-crops should be chosen correctly and managed well.

### Inter-cropping guidelines

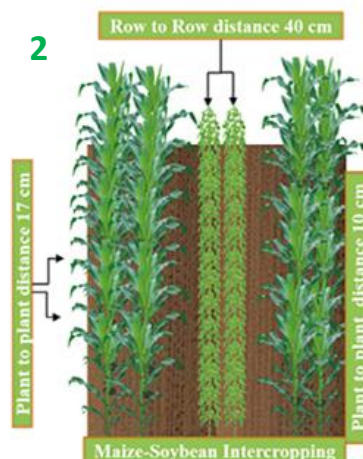
- Grow tall-growing crops along with bushy crops.
- Select shallow-rooted crops as inter-crops in the deep-rooted crop.
- Long-duration crops should be inter-cropped with short-duration crops.
- Grow slow-growing crops in vacant spaces of fast-growing crops.
- Selected main crops and inter-crops should have no negative effect on each other.
- Need to inter-crop non-legumes with legumes.
- Crops selected should be of different families to avoid various pests and diseases
- Each of inter-crops well-spaced, following crop's recommended spacing.

### Methods of inter-cropping

There are at least four basic spatial arrangements used in inter-cropping:



**1- Row inter-cropping:** Growing two or more crops at the same time with at least one crop planted in rows.



**2- Strip inter-cropping:** Growing two or more crops in strips broad enough to allow independent crop production with machines yet close enough for the crops to interact, such as inter-cropping beans and maize.



**3 Relay inter-cropping:** Planting a second crop into a standing crop at a time when the standing crop is at its reproductive stage but before harvesting.



**4- Mixed inter-cropping:** Growing two or more crops simultaneously on the same piece of land with no distinct row arrangement.