CASSAVA

Yuca, Manioc, Tapioca

*Manihot esculenta*

Euphorbiaceae
History

Originated in Brazil and Paraguay
Pollen in Mexico ~6,600 BC
Maya cultivation 600 AD
Grown in the Caribbean when Columbus invaded
3rd largest source of carbohydrates in the tropics
The bread of the tropics
Main food source for over 500M people
Contains cyanide
Propagation

Rarely by seed
• Sticks 6 - 10”
• Mature wood not green
• Cure 1 day before planting
• Two types ‘Bitter’ & ‘Sweet’
Growing

• Loose banks or raised beds
• Bury 1/3 to ½ length
• Spacing 2ft by 4ft
• Water to establish
• Withstands drought
• Productive on poor soils
• Balanced fertilizer
• Limited varieties (USDA limits import of sticks)
Harvest

- Leaves
- Roots 180 – 360 days
- Harvest as needed but before it gets woody
- Storage roots can be over 2ft long
- Limit root damage
- Use within 48 hrs
- Control exposure to air
- Wax or submerge in water
Processing cont.
Pests

Viruses
White fly
Spider mites
Mealy bug
Worms