

FARMER TO FARMER - SHARING ORGANIC PRACTICES

PLANTING TALO ON THE ROCK

Talo or *taro* is an important feature of diets on 'The Rock' or Niue. Presented during village show days to represent the strength or prowess of a farmer or baked in an *umu* (underground oven) for cultural feasting, as a desert with coconut cream, *talo* of Niue grows in abundance. There are 23 *talo* varieties in Niue, some like the *maganonu*, *lauwila*, are drought resistant varieties. The Pula matures within just four months by when it is harvested for consumption. Anyone can grow *talo* with these few simple steps.

Step 1

Get your planting materials ready. These are the stems of talo, the corm already cut off for eating or a new shooting.



Step 2

Dig holes about 80 centimetres apart. The Talo will form a canopy when they grow closely together, helping with weed control and producing a good-sized harvest within a small area of land. Dig the hole no more than 6 inches deep, slightly wide and at an angle of about 45 degrees. This gives the talo room 'breathing room'.



80 centimetres apart



Talo leaves forming a canopy



Hole dug at an angle

Step 3

Place the *talo* stem into the hole. Only cover the base of the stem with soil, leaving a portion of the hole uncovered. The space allows the air into to the *talo* for good growth. The *talo* corm will fill the space as it grows bigger.



Space for air to get in and the corm to grow into

Step 4

Bless the crop with good, strong growth, for example by uttering words like 'grow big and strong'.

Harvest Time

Harvest timelines vary for the different species. Some at four months like the Pula, others generally around seven months.



This info sheet has been produced with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific Project and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) Youth Leading Learning in Resilience Agriculture Practices project in partnership with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), the Land Resources Division of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Niue Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA).