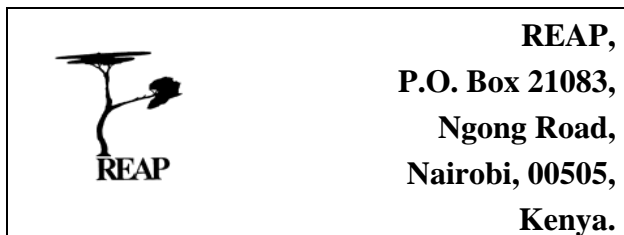


USING VETIVER GRASS AS A HEDGE AGAINST EROSION

Vetiver grass is particularly useful for planting along contour lines to help prevent soil erosion or to prevent run off so that soils do not dry up so quickly. In order to use it effectively for this purpose accurate contour lines must be marked.

Plant splits close together along the contour. In order to get a good cover along a contour, plant three splits every 10 cm., or 30 splits per metre. This ensures that the clumps that grow from the splits soon spread and meet up forming an effective barrier. In order for the hedges to form an effective barrier it is important to make sure that there are *no* gaps for water to pass through and the hedge should be brought up at the edge of a field or by a footpath.

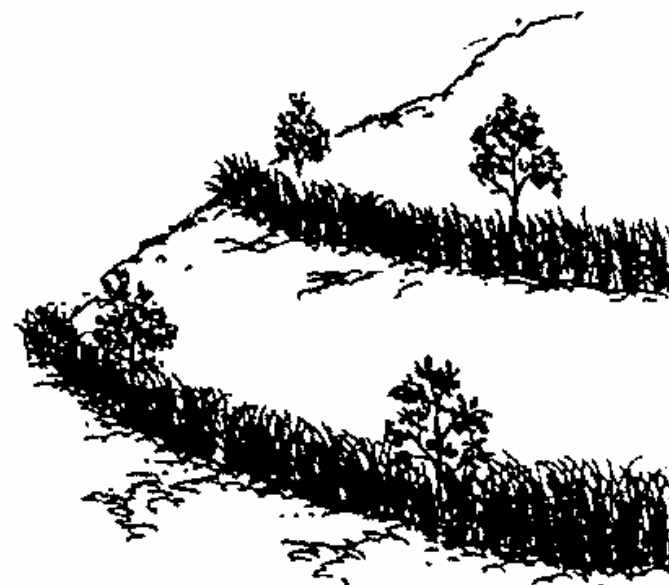
On moderately sloping land hedges of vetiver should be planted about every 15 metres across the land, along the contour.



VETIVER GRASS

Vetiver grass is a member of the same family as maize, sorghum, sugarcane and lemon grass, that is native to northern India. It has strong fibrous roots so is in particular used to stabilise soils and prevent soil erosion. It is relatively easy to protect from livestock.

Vetiver grass is planted from rooted splits taken from a clump. Once it is established in an area, these splits can be taken from existing plants. However for effective use a large number of splits are needed, so a nursery should be set up so that plants can be dug from the nursery for planting.



A VETIVER NURSERY

- Dig up a clump of grass
- Cut the leaves at about 6 inches (15cm) so that the plants will not dry out when planted
- Divide the clumps into individual ‘splits’, or rooted parts of the grass
- Plant the splits in a well dug piece of land at a spacing of about 45 cm x 45 cm (18” x 18”)
- Keep the nursery well watered and mulch it with dry grass between the rows. As the plants establish, leaves start growing from the centre of each split
- Each plant then spreads, developing new splits. Under good management between 10 and 40 splits can be obtained from one clump
- The clumps in the nursery can be dug up when they have developed a number of splits. Rapid multiplication can be achieved by dividing and replanting regularly.



Whenever a vetiver hedge is planted from a nursery, always replant the nursery, and if possible expand it so that more grass is available for planting.

Share the planting material with your neighbours.