

# [Flax seed crop: requirements for growth](https://assignbuster.com/flax-seed-crop-requirements-for-growth/)

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Flax has been produced in Manitoba for many years and once held a large portion of cropped acres throughout the province. Flax is still grown in some areas of Manitoba and there are many uses for the seed and straw.

Flax is a sensitive crop and must be planted at the correct depth, seeding rate, and date to get the best production from it. Flax is typically sown later in the spring into warm soil at a depth of ¾ to 1 1/4 inches. A high seeding rate of 40 to 45 pounds is recommended to achieve 40 plants a square foot with the emergence rate of 50-60%. This high density is required to compete with weeds. Flax may be affected from seedling blight on rare occasions, the seeds waxy coating makes it hard to treat, meaning it often isn’t treated.

Flax has Specific nutrient needs and will not respond to higher rates of fertilizer. Excess nitrogen will cause prolonged maturation and lodging issues. Farmers should have a soil test done but a general fertilizer analysis following a grain crop is 40-60 lbs of nitrogen, 30 to 40 lbs of phosphorous, 30 to 60 lbs of potassium on sandy soils, and 15 lbs of sulfur. Chlorosis may be an issue due to a deficiency in zinc, ensure the soil has adequate zinc to avoid it.

Flax is not a competitive crop meaning crop protection is important. Weed competition is the largest issue and can be controlled using high plant density and chemical herbicides. Herbicides that work well for flax are Curtail M which kills broadleaves such as thistles and volunteer canola. Centurian is also tank mixed which kills grasses such as wild oats. Typically, spraying herbicides twice is required as late weeds can still compete with established flax. Disease is not a huge issue in flax but rust, fusarium wilt, and powdery mildew are sometimes an issue. Some fungicides that help are Folicur, Headline, or Quadris which are sprayed at early flower.

Flax reaches maturity in 90 to 125 days depending on the variety, once ripe the plant forms “ bolls” that contain shiny flax seeds inside. The plant is mature when the bolls are brown, the seeds rattle inside when shook and the top opens slightly. Desiccation is often used to dry down the plant and the seeds to 10% moisture which is required for storage. Once dry, flax can be straight cut or swathed and rolled then harvested shortly after. Flax plants are very light and can easily be blown if swathed and left in the wind. The straw fibres are dropped and baled for the fibre if weed content is low or burned if it cannot be used. Typical yields for flax in Manitoba is 32 bu/ac on average, 45 on the high end and 17 on the low end.

Flax seed is used for oil, nutritional supplement, and used in many wood finishes. The straw fibre is used for insulation, paper, linen, and livestock bedding. Although there are many uses for both the seed and plant the market is beginning to drop. Many of these products are now made with synthetic products rather than with flax seed or straw.

Flax prices are currently at $12. 25 a bushel and has been around that price for the past two months. Historical prices have been variable, being as high as $18. 00 per bushel and as low as $10. 00. The price is variable but typically averages between $12. 50 and $13. 00 a bushel yearly.

Both globally and nationally supply will be similar or lower in the coming year as some people are removing flax from their rotation and adding more profitable crops such as soybeans. Demand will be similar as consumers continue to use flax for every day uses. Products manufactured from flax straw will be lower as less straws produced, and synthetic products replace it.

Overall Flax can be a profitable crop, but may be challenging as it is not a competitive plant. Flax needs protection in all areas from planting, spraying and even during harvest. Market prices have been high, meaning with average yields flax Is very profitable. It’s believe that consumers wont stop using flax as a healthy alternative in their diets, meaning the market will be here for the foreseeable future.

### Works Cited

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