

# Fallowing – teacher information sheet

## Basic Soil Management

For soil to maintain its capacity to support plant growth and high crop yields, it must be managed properly. Landslides, flooding and erosion can decrease soil capacity. Soil management is designed to minimise the impact of these processes, and means using soil wisely so that it can continue to support plant growth over the long term. One way to maintain soil fertility is to make and apply compost.

One way to maintain soil fertility is to apply fallowing.

## What is land fallowing?

Land fallowing is when the land is rested from cropping for a certain period of time. In the past the fallow period was 10–25 years, but today these periods in some areas are only 3–5 years as a result of land pressures due to increases in population.

## Why is land fallowing good?

Land fallowing helps to:

- restore the organic matter content of the soil
- restore soil fertility
- restore soil structure
- reduce or prevent soil erosion.



Old garden left to fallow, Papua New Guinea

## Information taken from

Seta-Waken P., Malie R., Utama P. and Palaniappan G. 2016. Introduction to basic crop production, post-harvest and financial management practices: a training manual for smallholder vegetable farmers in western Pacific island nations (ed. by C.J. Birch and B.E. Chambers). Monograph Number 176 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research: Canberra, ACT. <http://aciar.gov.au/node/25047>

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