

Viewpoint: Drought-tolerant crops could help Africa prevent \$372 billion in lost crop yields

Drought, a period of inadequate rain or no rainfall, is the main cause of crop yield loss in Africa, ultimately causing food insecurity and famines. In early 2018, over 15 million people from countries ranging across the continent — including Somalia, Ethiopia, [South Africa](#) and Kenya — were affected by drought.

Drought isn't uncommon in Africa. It happens somewhere on the continent every year. But weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable, as well as more severe. For example, the droughts of 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 made headlines across the continent and total cost the region an estimated at \$372 billion.

Smallholder farmers are most affected by drought because many don't have irrigation technology and rely on rainfall for their crops. With the unpredictability of rainfall patterns smallholder farmers are no longer able to plan their planting seasons.

[T]o ultimately become drought resilient, Africa's smallholder farmers must grow drought tolerant crops. Growing drought tolerant crops has many benefits including increasing on farm crop yields.

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Drought tolerant crops — like maize, cowpeas and rice [have]....been around since the 20th century, but the last two decades have seen an increase in drought tolerance research that targets staple crops like maize, rice and wheat.

Read full, original article: [Why African Farmers Must Consider Drought Tolerant Crops](#)