

About yam

The yam tuber is a preferred main source of carbohydrate and income for millions of people in Africa.

Over two-thirds of the world's yam production comes from the "yam zone" of West and Central Africa, where the crop plays an important part in livelihoods and traditional culture.

The research-for-development objectives at IITA focuses on developing new technologies and varieties of yam with desired agronomic and quality traits and improved yam-based cropping systems; and improving demand for yam and yam products based on market demands and preferences of farmers and local communities.



Yam at a glance

Scientific name: *Dioscorea rotundata* / *D. cayenensis*

Origin: Africa: White Guinea yam, *D. rotundata* and Yellow yam, *D. cayenensis*; Asia: Water yam, *D. alata*

Global area devoted to crop: 4.6 m ha

Global production: 48 million tons

Major producer: Nigeria

Per capita consumption in Africa: 61 kg

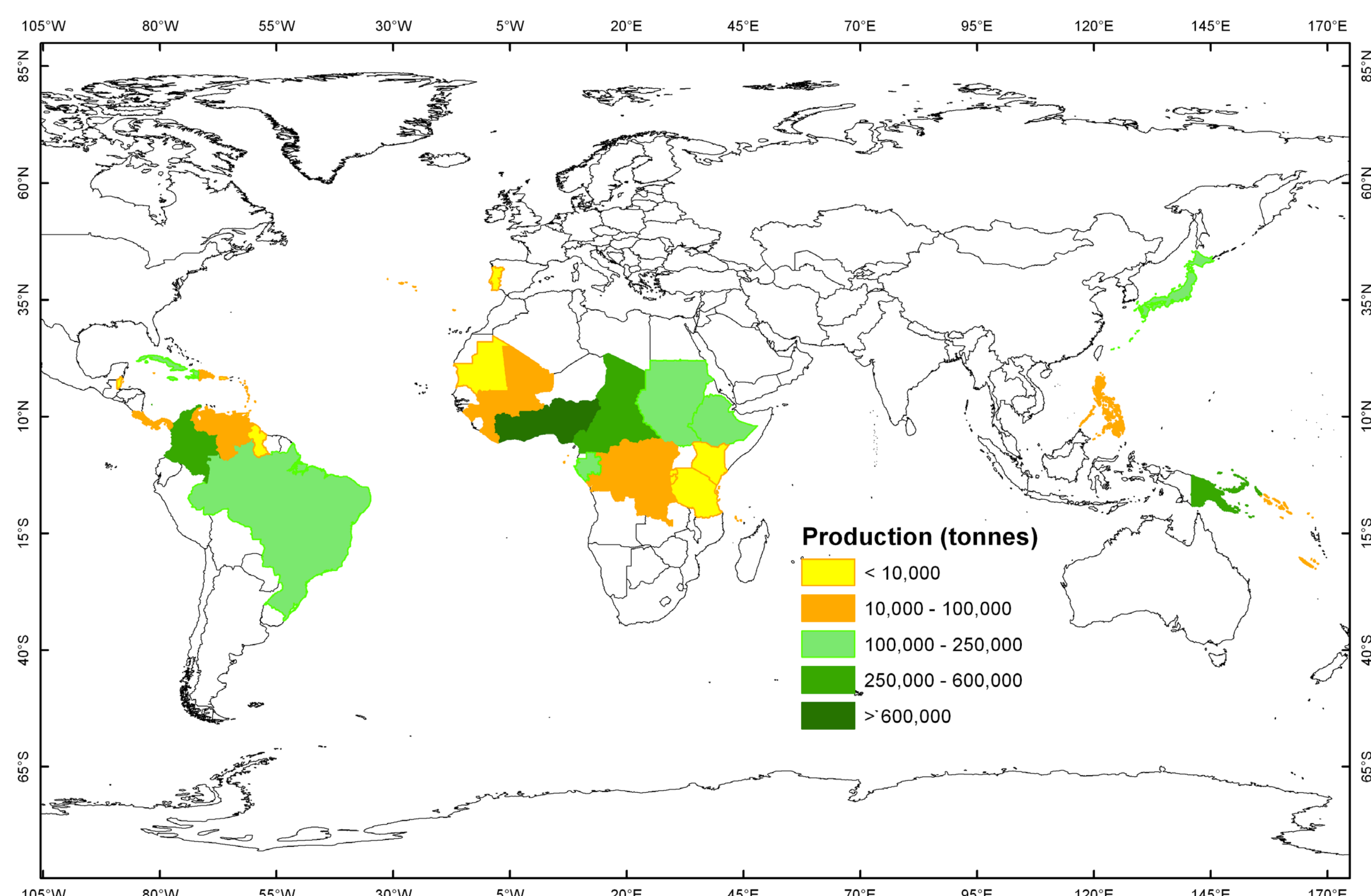
Uses: food and cultural uses (fertility and marriage ceremonies, harvest festivals)

Major pests and diseases: leaf and tuber beetles, mealybugs, scales, parasitic nematodes, anthracnose, leaf spot, leaf blight, tuber rot, yam mosaic virus



Yam for livelihoods

- 60 million people in West Africa eat yam as a staple food
- 31.8% of the Nigerian population and 26.2% in Ghana depend on yam for food and income security
- 48 million tons of yam are produced annually in West Africa on 4 million hectares
- 93% of world yam is produced by 5 African countries: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo
- 68% of global production produced in Nigeria = 36 million tons on 3 million hectares
- Average capita consumption per day ranges from 193 kcal a day in Togo to 502 kcal in Côte d'Ivoire



Yam-growing areas in the world

Source: IITA GIS lab

The Yam Improvement for Income and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA) is a new 5-year multi-center initiative led by IITA to improve livelihoods of people depending on yams. For more information about YIIFSWA, visit www.iita.org/web/yiifswa.