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Suitability of cowpea lines (*Vigna unguiculata* (L). Walp) for mix cropping with maize (*Zea mays*) in the dry zone

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Mixed cropping of cowpea with maize was a common practice among the dry zone farmers. Farmers used to plant cowpea and maize seeds simultaneously in the same planting hole as a mixed crop to reduce the labour requirement and to improve the crop varietal diversity, fertility of soil and land use efficiency. Identification of the best cowpea lines that match well with maize in mixed cropping would be beneficial to farmers with limited resources, under rainfed farming. Twelve different cowpea lines were evaluated in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with 3 replicates, at the Grain Legumes and Oil Crops Research and Development Center, Angunukolapellessa, during the 2011 *Yala* season. The Sampath hybrid was used as the maize variety for mixed cropping with each cowpea line. Significant differences were observed in days to 50 % flowering and yield of cowpea at $p \leq 0.05$ level. CP 81 was the highest yielding cowpea line (369 kg/ha) while producing a higher yield for maize (3159 kg/ha). According to the ranking for individual growth of cowpea, maize, combination of cowpea and maize and further consideration of yield of both crops, CP 143, CP 29 and CP 81 were identified as the best cowpea lines that performed well in mixed cropping with the Sampath maize hybrid in this study.

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