Agnote

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| Pasture Species Sowing Guide for the Top End |
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This Agnote lists the currently available species of grasses and legumes that can be sown as improved pastures for grazing or for the production of fodder in the monsoonal rainfall zone of the Northern Territory. This zone is defined as having a distinct wet season with over 600 mm annual rainfall.

Detailed information on most of the listed plants is available in Agnotes, which can be obtained from our website (see below) or from the Technical Publications Section, Berrimah Farm, GPO Box 3000, Darwin, NT 0801, or by calling (08) 8999 2313. For further information and helpful discussion, contact departmental officers at Berrimah Farm or the Katherine Research Station.

When purchasing seed, make sure that it has been tested for germination and purity. Ask to see a copy of the Seed Analysis Certificate. Do not buy pasture seeds that contain weed seeds, especially of new weeds or those on the NT Declared Weeds list. If in doubt, contact the Seed Laboratory at Berrimah Farm. Where possible, buy locally-produced seed. To maintain viability, store seeds in a cool dry room prior to sowing. The availability and prices of seeds can fluctuate markedly from year to year, depending on the previous year’s production and the choice of seed producers to grow particular cultivars for seed. Seeds of new cultivars are generally not freely available for a number of years after they are released.

Where possible, a mixture of grass and legume species should be sown or planted. For easy management, it is better to sow a number of legumes with a single grass. When sowing a mixture of legumes with a grass, reduce the sowing rate of each component. If in doubt of what pasture mix to sow, consult a departmental Advisory Officer.

Pasture grass as Beatrice Hill

**Figure 1.** Pasture grass at Beatrice Hill

**Table 1.** Pasture grasses

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Common name** | **Cultivar** | **Rainfall (mm)** | **Soils** |
| *Bothriochloa pertusa*  *Cenchrus ciliaris*  *Cenchrus ciliaris*  *Cenchrus setiger*  *Chloris gayana*  *Digitaria eriantha*  *Digitaria milanjiana*  *Digitaria milanjiana*  *Digitaria swynnertonii*  *Echinochloa polystachya*  *Hymenachne acutigluma*  *Panicum maximum*  *Panicum maximum*  *Setaria sphacelata*  *Sorghum* sp  *Urochloa decumbens*  *Urochloa humidicola*  *Urochloa mosambicensis*  *Urochloa mutica* | Indian bluegrass  Buffel grass  Buffel grass  Birdwood grass  Rhodes grass  Pangola grass  Finger grass  Finger grass  Finger grass  Aleman grass  Hymenachne  Guinea grass  Guinea grass  Setaria  Perennial sorghum  Signal grass  Koronivia grass  Sabi grass  Para grass | Bowen  American  Gayndah  Fine-cut  Jarra  Strickland  Arnhem  Amity  Native  Common  Hamil  Kazungula  Silk  Basilisk  Tully  Nixon | Over 600  600 to 1300  600 to 1300  600 to 750  Irrigated only  Over 1100  Over 1100  Over 1100  Over 1100  Over 1100  Over 1000  Over 1000  Over 1100  Over 1100  900 to 1300  Over 1000  Over 1000  600 to 1200  Over 1000 | Clays, well drained  Sandy loam  Sandy loam  Sandy loam  Upland  Wet to upland  Wet to upland  Wet to upland  Wet to upland  Flooded  Flooded  Deep, well drained  Deep, well drained  Wet to upland  Deep, well drained  Upland  Wet to upland  Sandy loam  Flooded |

**Table 2.** Pasture legumes

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Common name** | **Cultivar** | **Rainfall (mm)** | **Soils** |
| *Aeschynomene americana*  *Aeschynomene americana*  *Centrosema pascuorum*  *Centrosema pascuorum*  *Chamaecrista rotundifolia*  *Clitoria ternatea*  *Stylosanthes hamata*  *Stylosanthes hamata*  *Stylosanthes scabra*  *Stylosanthes scabra* | American joint-vetch  American joint-vetch  Centurion, Centro  Centurion, Centro  Round leaf cassia  Blue pea  Caribbean stylo  Caribbean stylo  Shrubby stylo  Shrubby stylo | Glenn  Lee  Bundey  Cavalcade  Wynn  Milgarra  Amiga  Verano  Seca  Siran | Over 1100  Over 1100  Over 1100  700 to 1500  Over 900  900 to 1300  Over 600  Over 600  Over 600  Over 600 | Wet to upland  Wet to upland  Wet and upland  Wet and upland  Sandy surfaced  Upland  Upland  Upland  Upland, well drained  Upland, well drained |

**Table 3.** Pasture mixes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grass** | **Suitable legumes** |
| Birdwood grass  Buffel grass  Finger grass  Perennial sorghum  Guinea grass  Indian bluegrass  Koronivia grass  Pangola grass  Para grass  Sabi grass  Setaria  Signal grass | Amiga, Seca, Siran, Verano  Amiga, Cavalcade, Milgarra, Seca, Siran, Verano  Amiga, Bundey, Cavalcade, Glenn, Verano  Amiga, Bundey, Cavalcade, Milgarra, Seca, Siran, Verano  Amiga, Bundey, Cavalcade, Glenn, Lee, Verano  Amiga, Verano, Wynn  Amiga, Bundey, Glenn, Lee, Verano  Amiga, Bundey, Cavalcade, Glenn, Verano  Bundey, Glenn, Lee  Amiga, Cavalcade, Milgarra, Seca, Siran, Verano, Wynn  Bundey, Cavalcade, Glenn, Lee, Wynn  Amiga, Bundey, Cavalcade, Glenn, Lee, Verano |

**Table 4.** Forage grasses

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Common name** | **Cultivar** | **Rainfall (mm)** | **Soils** |
| *Pennisetum americanum*  *Pennisetum americanum*  *Sorghum* sp.  *Sorghum* sp.  *Sorghum* sp.  *Sorghum* sp. | pearl millet  pearl millet  forage sorghum  forage sorghum  forage sorghum  forage sorghum | Ingrid Pearl  Katherine Pearl  Jumbo  Magic  Sugargraze  Silk | 900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300 | Deep, well-drained  Deep, well -rained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained |

**Table 5.** Forage legumes

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Common name** | **Cultivar** | **Rainfall (mm)** | **Soils** |
| *Lablab purpureus*  *Lablab purpureus*  *Vigna unguiculata*  *Vigna unguiculata*  *Vigna unguiculata* | Lablab bean  Lablab bean  Cowpea  Cowpea  Cowpea | Highworth  Rongai  Arafura  Meringa  Palmyra | 900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300  900 to 1300 | Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained  Deep, well-drained |

There are other species and cultivars available, including some newly released, which have not been included above because they have not been fully tested as pasture plants under commercial conditions in the Top End.

The species and cultivars which appear to have some potential, are listed below.

**Table 6.** Other species/cultivars

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| --- | --- |
| **Grass species** | **Common name** |
| *Dicanthium aristatum* cv Floren  *Panicum* sp cv Nucal  *Paspalum notatum* cv Pensacola  *Pennisetum glaucum* cv Siromill  *Sorghum* sp cv Jaffa  *Urochloa brizantha* cv Mekong  *Urochloa mosambicensis* cv Saraji | Angleton grass  Bahia grass  Pearl millet  Perennial sorghum  Sabi grass |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Legume species** | **Common name** |
| *Alysicarpus vaginalis*  *Centrosema brasilianum* cvOolloo  *Desmanthus sp* cv *Progardes*  *Leucaena leucocephala* cv Cunningham  *Leucaena leucocephala* cv Peru  *Leucaena leucocephala* cv Taramba  *Stylosanthes guianensis* cv V8 | Buffalo clover  Brasilianum, centro  Desmanthus  Leucaena  Leucaena  Leucaena  Stylo |

Warning

Pasture plants have the potential to become weeds in certain situations. To prevent that, ensure that pasture seeds and/or vegetative materials are not inadvertently transferred to adjacent properties or road sides.

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