



Prairie grass

Scientific name(s)

Bromus willdenowii, syn *B. catharticus*, syn *B. uniloides*

Strengths

- vigorous winter, early spring growth.
- Good summer production where moisture available

Limitations

- Perenniality short-lived.
- Not suited to poorly drained/heavy textured/infertile soils

Plant description

Plant: densely tufted, short-lived perennial, grows up to 100 cm tall

Stem: large tillers

Leaves: large-leaved, up to 30 cm by 8 mm; rolled on emergence. Very short hairs on upper side. Slightly rough margins.

Seedhead: open long pendulous panicle. Spikelets in groups of 4 with 6-12 florets/spikelet.

Seeds: Large, oblong, grooved grain, pointed at both ends.

Pasture type and use

Special purpose pasture for cool season growth and summer quality. Main use is by dairy farmers.

Where it grows

Rainfall

> 800 mm

Soils

Very well drained & highly fertile; light/medium textured; pH >5.5

Temperature

5-30°C

Establishment

Companion species

Legumes: red, white and sub. clover, lucerne

Herbs: plantain, chicory

Sowing/planting rates as single species

20-60 kg/ha; sow at ~10 mm depth. De-awned seed is available for easier sowing. Fungicide treated seed required to protect from head smut disease

Sowing/planting rates in mixtures

15-25 kg/ha

Sowing time

When soil temp. >10°C. Autumn, or early spring in long growing seasons. Sensitive to cold if sown late autumn/winter.

Inoculation

Not applicable.

Fertiliser

Requires highly fertile soil. Correct any nutrient deficiencies, especially K, N, P, S

Management

Maintenance fertiliser

20-50 kg P/ha. Very responsive to N. Ensure K adequate. For optimum growth Olsen soil P > 20.

Grazing/cutting

Graze at 4-5 leaf stage. Spell for 3 weeks in spring to 5 weeks in winter. Lax rotational grazing is advised but can tolerate continuous grazing; maintain below 25 cm for optimal quality. Do not graze if soil is waterlogged. Suitable for hay/silage.

Seed production

Seed is produced in New Zealand.

Ability to spread

Will regenerate from self-sown seed if sympathetically grazed in autumn; particularly in cattle pasture

Weed potential

Commonly found on roadsides in dairying districts <http://web.cotton.crc.org.au/content/Industry/Publications/Weeds/WeedIdentificationTools/>

Major pests

Army worm. Seedlings damaged by red legged earthmite and lucerne flea.

Major diseases

Head smut. Avoid by using seed dressed with fungicide.

Herbicide susceptibility

Glyphosate

Animal production

Feeding value

High; relatively high protein content

Palatability

Very good, including seedhead

Production potential

Good cool season vigour; relatively good quality in summer

Livestock disorders/toxicity

No toxins. For dependable mineral nutrition sow with legumes

Cultivars

Cultivar	Seed source/Information
Ceres Atom	PGG Seeds
Grasslands Matua	Wrightson Seeds
Tango	AusWest Seeds

Ⓢ Denotes that this variety is protected by Plant Breeder's Rights Australia

Further information

Weblink:
Future Dairy - Prairie grass
NSWDPI - Prairie grass

Acknowledgements

DPIs, Seed companies

Author and date

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