

PLANTING SORGHUM SUDANGRASS HYBRIDS OR MILLET FOR FORAGE AND BIOMASS

Description: Sorghum sudangrass is a warm season tall growing annual grass. Sorghum sudangrass is a hybrid cross between sorghum and sudangrass. Millet is a warm-season tall growing annual grass. There are several types of millets but the most popular millet for forage is Pearl Millet.

Uses: For temporary grazing, wildlife food and temporary erosion control

Soil adaptation: Sorghum sudangrass and millets are adapted to a wide range of soils. Pearl millet is more adapted to acid soils than sorghum sudangrass.

Cultural Specifications

Method of planting: By seeding.

Seedbed preparation: Prepare a good firm seedbed to a depth of 4 or more inches and smooth the surface by harrowing.

Fertilizer and lime: Apply fertilizer and lime according to Extension Service Soils Lab recommendations or the attached nutrient budget. Incorporate into the top 2 or 3 inches of soil. Apply lime and fertilizer in separate operations.

Planting time: Plant sorghum-sudangrass hybrids between April 1 and June 30. Plant millet between May 1 and June 30.

Planting rate: Plant 15 pounds of seed per acre drilled or 35 pounds of seed per acre broadcast.

Planting depth: Cover sorghum-sudangrass seed 1/2 to 1 inch deep and cultipack. Cover millet seed 1/2 inch deep and cultipack.

Plant establishment: Do not graze until the plants are 20 to 30 inches tall. Regulate grazing to maintain a minimum height of 8 to 10 inches.

Plant management and maintenance: Sorghum sudangrass and pearl millets will utilize about one pound of nitrogen per day. Do not apply over 68 pounds of nitrogen per acre at one time. Plant in staggered plantings for best utilization. Requires high stocking rates to utilize rapid growth. Rotational grazing will need to be used to manage size and quality of the plants. Nitrate poison or prussic acid poison can be a problem with sorghum sudangrass. Nitrate poisoning can occur when there is adequate soil nitrogen and extended periods of cloudy weather. Prussic acid poisoning can occur when growth is reduced by drought, cold weather, killing frost, or excessive cloudy weather. When a killing frost is predicted, remove livestock and do not graze for two (2) weeks.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

