

## Pasture Species Sowing Guide for the Top End of the Northern Territory

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This Agnote lists the currently available species of introduced grasses and legumes that can be sown as 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 and dry seasons with over 600 mm annual rainfall. For each cultivar, the optimal rainfall range is presented. While the cultivars will grow outside the optimal zone, production and persistence may be lower.

The species and cultivars listed can be currently planted or sown in the Northern Territory, some of those listed are not permitted in Queensland or Western Australia.

Detailed information on most of the listed plants is available in Agnotes, which can be obtained from our website

When purchasing seed, make sure that it has been recently 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. 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 cultivars seed producers choose to grow. 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, and because grazing animals will selectively graze the most palatable grass, 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.



**Figure 1.** Pangola grass at Beatrice Hill, NT

The suitable grasses are presented in Table 1 followed by the legumes in Table 2, forage grasses in Table 3, forage legumes in Table 4 and other species requiring more testing in Table 5.

**Table 1.** Pasture grasses

Species	Common name	Cultivar	Rainfall (mm)	Soils
<i>Bothriochloa pertusa</i>	Indian bluegrass	Bowen	800 to 1100	Clays, well drained
		Emerald	1000 to 1200	
		Keppel	1000 to 1200	
<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	Buffel grass	American	600 to 1200	Sandy loam
		Gayndah	600 to 1200	Sandy loam
<i>Cenchrus setiger</i>	Birdwood grass		600 to 900	Sandy loam
<i>Chloris gayana</i>	Rhodes grass	Fine-cut	Irrigated only	Upland
		Gulf Cut	Irrigated only	Upland
		Reclaimer	Irrigated only	Upland
<i>Digitaria eriantha</i>	Pangola grass		Over 1100	Wet to upland
	Digit grass	Premier	Over 1100	Irrigated, upland
<i>Digitaria milanjiana</i>	Finger grass	Arnhem	Over 1200	Wet to upland
		Jarra	Over 1000	Wet to upland
		Strickland	Over 1000	Irrigated, upland
<i>Echinochloa polystachya</i>	Aleman grass	Amity	Over 1100	Flooded
<i>Megathyrus maximus</i>	Guinea grass	Common	Over 1300	Deep, well drained
		Hamil	Over 1300	Deep, well drained
		Riversdale	Over 1300	Deep, well drained
<i>Megathyrus maximus</i> <i>var trichoglume</i>	Guinea grass	Gatton	Irrigated only	Upland
		Green panic	Irrigated only	Upland
		MegamaxR	Irrigated only	Upland
<i>Megathyrus</i> sp	Guinea grass	NuCaI™	Over 1200	Wet to upland
<i>Setaria sphacelata</i>	Setaria	Kazungula	Over1300	Wet to upland
		Solander	Over1300	Irrigated, upland
		Splenda	Over1300	Irrigated, upland
<i>Sorghum</i> sp	Perennial sorghum	Jaffa	900 to 1300	Deep, well drained
		Silk	900 to 1300	Deep, well drained
<i>Urochloa brizantha</i>	Brizantha	Mekong	Over 1300	Upland
<i>Urochloa decumbens</i>	Signal grass	Basilisk	Over 1300	Upland
<i>Urochloa humidicola</i>	Koronivia grass	Tully	Over 1300	Wet soils
<i>Urochloa mosambicensis</i>	Sabi grass	Nixon	800 to 1200	Sandy loam
<i>Urochloa mutica</i>	Para grass		Over 1000	Flooded
<i>Urochloa</i> sp	Brachiaria hybrid	Mulato11	Over 1300	Irrigated, upland

**Table 2.** Pasture legumes

Species	Common name	Cultivar	Rainfall (mm)	Soils
<i>Aeschynomene americana</i>	American joint-vetch	Glenn	Over 1100	Wet to upland
		Lee	Over 1100	Wet to upland
<i>Centrosema brasilianum</i>	Brasilianum	Oolloo	Over 1100	Upland
<i>Centrosema pascuorum</i>	Centurion, Centro	Bundey	Over 1300	Wet and upland
		Cavalcade	800 to 1500	Wet and upland
<i>Chamaecrista rotundifolia</i>	Round leaf cassia	Wynn	Over 900	Sandy surfaced
<i>Clitoria ternatea</i>	Blue pea	Milgarra	900 to 1300	Upland
<i>Desmanthus</i> sp	Desmanthus	Marc	900 to 1100	Clay
		Progades	900 to 1100	Clay
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Leucaena	Cunningham	1200 to1300	Upland, well drained
		K8	1200 to1300	Upland, well drained
		Peru	1200 to1300	Upland, well drained
		Redlands	1200 to1300	Upland, well drained
<i>Stylosanthes guianensis</i>	Stylo	Stylhay	Over 1200	Upland, well drained
		V8	Over 1200	Upland, well drained
<i>Stylosanthes hamata</i>	Caribbean stylo	Amiga	Over 600	Upland
	Caribbean stylo	Verano	Over 600	Upland
<i>Stylosanthes scabra</i>	Shrubby stylo	Seca	Over 600	Upland
	Shrubby stylo	Siran	Over 600	Upland
				Upland, well drained Upland, well drained

**Table 3.** Forage grasses

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

Note: there are many forage sorghum cultivars marketed in Australia. Most of these are suitable for the NT, particularly the sweet sorghums.

**Table 4.** Forage legumes

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

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

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

**Table 5.** Other species/cultivars needing further testing

<b>Grass species</b>	<b>Common name</b>
<i>Dicanthium aristatum</i> cv Floren	Angleton grass
<i>Paspalum notatum</i> cv Pensacola	Bahia grass
<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i> cv Siromill	Pearl millet
<i>Urochloa mosambicensis</i> cv Saraji	Sabi grass

<b>Legume species</b>	<b>Common name</b>
<i>Alysicarpus vaginalis</i>	Buffalo clover
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> cv Redlands	Leucaena
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> cv Wondergraze	Leucaena
<i>Stylosanthes guianensis</i> cv <i>Stylhay</i>	Stylo
<i>Stylosanthes guianensis</i> cv <i>V8</i>	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 off property to adjacent properties or road sides.

Please visit us at our website

[Pastures and fodder crops - NT.GOV.AU](http://NT.GOV.AU)

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