



Bisset

Creeping Bluegrass

Bothriochloa insculpta

600mm+

5.0 - 7.0

Wide
Range
Types

AgriCOTE
or Bare

Key Features

- A strong stoloniferous grass suitable for grazing and/or hay production
- Good drought and close grazing tolerance
- Finer in the stem, later maturing and more stoloniferous than Hatch
- A hardy and useful grass that will tolerate low fertile soils
- Effective ground cover to combat erosion
- Resists weed invasion
- Tolerant of fire

Description

Bisset bluegrass is a warm season perennial growing to about 1.5m tall. It is leafy, late-flowering and will grow into early winter until cut by frost. Bisset grows as well or better than Hatch in drier districts and is the superior cultivar in wetter areas.

Bisset Bluegrass thrives on country where Green Panic and Rhodes Grass will not persist. Even without fertilizer, it can compete successfully with native grasses on forest country. It also responds well to nitrogen fertilizer. This species grows better than any other improved grasses on low fertility soils, including loams, clay loams and sandy soils. They do not grow satisfactorily in waterlogged situations or on very heavy clays.

Establishment

Recommended planting rates for AgriCOTE Pro-Tech for Bisset Bluegrass are:

Marginal Dryland:	6 - 8Kg per Hectare
Good Dryland:	10 - 12Kg per Hectare
Irrigated:	12-15Kg per Hectare

Bisset Bluegrass seed is light and fluffy, and cannot be planted through combine planters. It can be sown satisfactorily through a revolving drum seeder or mixed with fertilizer and broadcast through a fertilizer spreader. It should be covered by no more than 1cm of soil. Ideally, grazing should be withheld until seedlings develop a strong root system, stands have been effectively established under quite heavy grazing.

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Variety Management / Agronomy

Bisset should be managed to maintain fairly low, leafy stands, to ensure palatability and ready acceptance by stock. It remains green and leafy through until late autumn, well after speargrass and other native grasses have matured and hayed off.

Bisset should be well grazed during summer to restrict the development of stemmy growth. It tolerates heavier grazing pressures than Rhodes Grass and Green Panic.

The long stolons of Bisset, unlike Hatch, are not removed by grazing because they are usually strongly rooted down. This enables Bisset to continue spreading vegetatively, making it even more resistant to over-grazing than Hatch. More rooted plantlets of Bisset survive frost than Hatch which is usually cut back to the original crowns. Although burning should not normally be necessary, Bisset has survived intense fire under very dry conditions. Plants recover rapidly following rain.

Pest / Diseases Resistance

Main diseases are ergot caused by *Claviceps pusilla* and rust caused by *Puccinia duthiae*, some varieties being more susceptible than others. It is also attacked by leaf spot, *Mycoleptodiscus lateralis*, and a smut, *Sporisorium doidgeae*. Attack by nematodes (unconfirmed) may have caused loss of stand in sandy soil. It is resistant to the leaf rust disease that affects Hatch, particularly under high rainfall conditions.

Performance

Paddock yields of the order of 10 t/ha DM, and 15-20 t/ha DM in seed crops, where nitrogen fertiliser and possibly irrigation are used.

In the southern hemisphere subtropics, 'Bisset' commences flowering in early May, leading maturity in late June/early July. Low temperatures delay seed ripening, and frosts may destroy immature seed. In the upland tropics, 'Bisset' matures between mid May and mid June, about 4 weeks after head emergence.

Animal Production

Over a 335 day period, cattle have gained an average of 0.5 kg/hd/day, with a peak of 1.25 kg/day in autumn, and a low of -0.4 kg/day in winter. Quality of feed declines with age, and more rapidly with the onset of flowering. Crude Protein levels in young leaf may be of the order of 10%, declining to about 5% in standing hay at the end of the season. Calcium level of 0.32% and phosphorus level of 0.12% has been measured.*

Toxicity: Low in oxalate, so will not cause big head in horses. No problems recorded

* data courtesy of http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/Forages/Media/Html/Bothriochloa_insculpta.htm

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