



Vigna unguiculata



Key Features

- An extremely versatile summer forage providing good grazing, hay and silage options
- Prostrate growth habit that can withstand harder grazing
- Improved root and stem rot resistance
- Great source of nitrogen fixation in summer rotation
- Ideal for producing high quality summer finishing feed
- Nil prussic acid poisoning issues
- Suitable as a companion legume with millet and forage sorghum

Description

Ebony PR is a diploid, annual, forage cowpea with a spreading growth habit. It was selected as a superior forage or green manuring cowpea on the basis of its resistance to stem rot disease, growth habit, vigorous growth and good seed yield.

Ebony PR is resistant to races 3 and 4 of the severe root rot fungus, *Phytophthora vignae*. Meringa cowpeas are susceptible to both these races.

A distinguishing feature of Ebony PR Cowpeas is the slight anthocyanin tinge along the length of their seed pod and the strong anthocyanin colouration of the tip of the pod.

Ebony PR was developed for use as a green manure crop in sugar cane growing areas and for use as a forage crop in tropical and sub tropical areas. Other features of Ebony PR include a long production season, increased dry matter production & improved return post-grazing. Ebony PR can be also sown into heavier soil types providing an alternative to Lab Lab. Ebony has good drought tolerance. Good tolerance to periods of heat and moisture stress. Best under warm, humid conditions, with temperatures between 20°C and 30°C.



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Variety Management / Agronomy

Ebony PR is widely used in intercropping of the major African cereals; maize, sorghum and millet.

Planting Ebony Cowpea with sorghum or millet as a combination crop can add some real benefits; adding nitrogen to the system for increased yield, while also providing a more balanced ration for grazing stock, and adding quality to hay and silage cuts through increased protein content.

Planting rates for the components of a combination crop should be 50-60% of the recommended rates for the individual varieties.

Ebony is very susceptible to frost. It grows well only in warm seasons with 25-35°C as optimum temperature. Grows from sea level up to 1,500 m asl, depending on latitude

When seasons are suitable and when sown relatively early, the best forage types will regrow after grazing. Grazing should be light to ensure that the plant frame is retained and damage is limited.

Pest / Disease Resistance

Bean fly can attack late-sown crops in the two to three leaf stage. Heliothis can affect flowering and seed set. However, insects are not usually a problem.

Animal Production

Ebony PR has high nutritive value. Crude Protein in green foliage 14 - 21% and in crop residues 6 - 8%, in grain 18 - 26%; IVDMD of foliage >80%. IVDMD of residues after grain harvest 55-65%.

When fed as a supplement, 10-20% increase in milk yield (Colombia) and 50% higher animal live weight gain (67 g/day with sheep) are reported (West Africa).

Toxicity: Safe grazing, low bloat risk and nil prussic acid, can safely graze stressed crop. Cowpeas have been known to cause photosensitivity in young sheep.

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