



# Tully Grass

*Urochloa humidicola*

*Brachiaria humidicola*

1000mm+

4.5-7.5

Wide  
Range  
Types

## Key Features

- Highly stoloniferous and can tolerate prolonged waterlogging
- Vigorous and dense mat forming growth habit
- Withstands heavy grazing with minimal weed invasion

## Description

Tully grass is native to Africa, from southern Sudan and Ethiopia in the north to South Africa and Namibia in the south. Grown widely in humid-tropical countries of South America, the Pacific Islands and south-east Asia, and in coastal regions of northern Australia. Sown for permanent pasture for grazing and as ground cover for control of erosion and weeds. In East Venezuela, also used for hay .

Tully replaces Signal grass in areas prone to waterlogging. It is recommended for high rainfall areas and has been reported to have good tolerance to acid soil however, it has many other features similar to Signal grass.

Tully grass has a vigorous and dense mat forming growth habit, which allows for heavy grazing and minimum weed invasion but this density makes it incompatible with twining type legumes.

It has shown better tolerance to low Phosphorus soils, Spittle bug attack than Signal grass and superior growth in marginal and poorly drained areas. Widely adapted to tropics and sub-tropics and grows best at 30° - 35°C with 1,500mm annual rainfall condition

## Establishment

Recommended planting rates for Tully Grass are:

Marginal Dryland: 2 - 6Kg per Hectare

Good Dryland: 8 - 10Kg per Hectare

Irrigated: 12-15Kg per Hectare

Seed may be dormant for 6 months after harvest and so should be stored or acid-scarified before planting. Seed is broadcast at 2-6 kg/ha (depending on germination percentage) onto a well-prepared seedbed and lightly harrowed. Seed will decline in quality rapidly if stored inappropriately and poor seed quality has been the cause of many planting failures.



# Tully Grass

## Urochloa humidicola

*Brachiaria humidicola*

### Variety Management / Agronomy

Performs best under moderate to heavy grazing pressure due to its strongly stoloniferous growth habit. Will maintain good ground cover even under very heavy grazing. Under light grazing, the dense mat of decumbent leaves and stems, associated with humid conditions, forms a bulk of low quality herbage.

### Performance

Tully grass produces more summer herbage in the wet season than Signal Grass and less in Winter.

A persistent and vigorous growing perennial – once established it can persist for a number of years due to its robust root system.

Dry matter production is strongly influenced by soil fertility and ranges from 7–34 t/ha/year. In Fiji, unfertilised koronivia grass produced an annual DM yield of 11 t/ha DM, whereas DM increased to 34 t/ha with the application of 452 kg/ha N. There was a linear yield response to nitrogen. In humid-tropical Vanuatu, annual yield declined from 28 t/ha DM, to 17 t/ha DM as fertility declined. Annual DM yields of 7 t/ha and 5–9 t/ha were reported from Paraguay and Brazil, respectively. Although the leaf appears hard and fibrous, nutritional value is good (5–17% Crude Protein) considering the low fertility of the soils in which it is often grown. In the Colombian savannah, 6-week old foliage in a 54-accession collection had 5.2–8.5% CP content in the rainy and 3.3–9.3% in the dry season; IVDMD was 59–66% and 51–67%, respectively. Lower quality than other Brachiaria species such as B. decumbens, B. brizantha or B. ruziziensis.

Digestibility (48–75%) declines quickly if not grazed.

### Pest / Disease Resistance

Tolerant of, but not truly resistant to spittlebugs (*Aeneolamia* spp., *Deois* spp. and *Zulia* spp.); more tolerant than B. decumbens and recovers quickly making it useful in parts of South America, but can be badly attacked in the humid tropics of Brazil. Highly resistant to leaf-cutting ants (*Acromyrmex* spp. and *Atta* spp.), but can be severely attacked by striped grass worm (*Mocis latipes*). A leaf rust (*Uromyces setariae-italicae*), introduced from Africa, has attacked Tully grass in Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, and can lead to 100% loss of yield.

### Animal Production

In Colombian savannas, Live weight gains of 80 kg/head/yr and 240 kg/ha/yr from pure swards increased to 134 kg/head and 402 kg/ha/yr when grown with *Arachis pintoi*.

In humid tropics of Ecuador, pure stands, grazed at 2 head/ha gave LWGs of 0.56 kg/head/day and 406 kg/ha/yr. In humid tropics of Peru, with A. pintoi, at 4 head/ha, LWGs were 0.43 kg/head/day and 692 kg/ha/yr. In Panama, pure stands grazed at 4 head/ha, gave LWGs of 0.32 kg/head/day and 501 kg/ha/yr while with *Pueraria phaseoloides*, the corresponding LWGs were 0.38 kg/head/day and 585 kg/ha/yr.

In humid tropical Vanuatu, steers grazing koronivia/legume pastures gained 0.74, 0.68 and 0.55 kg/head/day at stocking rates of 2, 2.5 and 3.5 head/ha, respectively, over a two-year period.

**Toxicity:** Photosensitization has been recorded in horses grazing Tully grass pasture for over 5 months, but is not common. Its low Ca concentration and high levels of oxalate may induce 'big head' disease (parathyroidism) in horses. Can be overcome by feeding of appropriate mineral supplements.

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