



Hatch

Creeping Bluegrass

Bothriochloa insculpta

600mm+

5.0 - 7.0

Wide
Range
Types

AgriCOTE
or Bare

Key Features

- Good drought and grazing tolerance with creeping stolons
- Can be slower to establish than other grasses
- A hardy and useful grass that will tolerate low fertile soils
- Effective ground cover to combat erosion
- Resists weed invasion
- Tolerant of fire

Description

Hatch 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. Hatch 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 Hatch Bluegrass are:

Marginal Dryland: 6 - 8Kg per Hectare

Good Dryland: 10 - 12Kg per Hectare

Irrigated: 12-15Kg per Hectare

Hatch 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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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 a Rust, leaf spot, *Mycoleptodiscus lateralis* and a smut, *Sporisorium doidgeae*. Attack by nematodes (unconfirmed) may have caused loss of stand in sandy soil.

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, Hatch commences flowering in late April, leading maturity in mid to late May. Low temperatures delay seed ripening, and frosts may destroy immature seed. In the upland tropics, seed crops have been harvested between between late April and mid May, 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

Variety Management / Agronomy

Hatch 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.

Hatch should be well grazed during summer to restrict the development of stemmy growth. It tolerates heavier grazing pressures than Rhodes Grass and Green Panic, although not as resistant to over-grazing compared to Bisset. Although burning should not normally be necessary, Hatch has survived intense fire under very dry conditions. Plants recover rapidly following rain.

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