Rhodes Grass
KATAMBORA

PUBLIC

Sowing Rate: 3-6 kg/ha (Coated) 2-4 kg/ha (Bare)

Key Features

- Quick establishing diploid variety
- Good drought tolerance
- Grows well on lower fertility soils

Description

Katambora is a diploid, originally from Katambora, Zambia A leafy, densely growing variety with long, relatively thin stolons. Later maturing with a more vigorous stoloniferous habit than in 'Pioneer'; leaves and culms are finer and have less tendency of becoming tussocky. Selected for drought tolerance and very rapid growth rates. Higher spring and summer yields than those of 'Pioneer'; more persistent under grazing. Katambora is suitable for high seed production. It establishes and covers rapidly and persists well, even at low fertility. Nematode resistant types (see 'Nemkat').

Performance

Katambora Rhodes Grass forms strong bunch-type stools; its runners rapidly cover the ground surface, anchoring at the nodes and producing plantlets. Its vigorous root system gives a degree of drought resistance but it performs best in the 700 - l,000 mm belt. Rhodes grass shows moderate frost tolerance, but is primarily a summer grower.
Rhodes grass is quite versatile in its soil requirements, although it grows best on softwood scrub red loams and the stronger brigalow soils. It is quite salt tolerant, and is one of the best grasses for sowing on earthworks. Rhodes grass will combine with Siratro, Stylo, Lotononis and Wynn Cassia in coastal/sub-coastal areas of higher rainfall and with lucerne in inland districts.

Disease Resistance/Tolerance

'Katambora' and 'Nemkat' are resistant to Rotylenchulus reniformis and are used in pasture leys to reduce nematode populations in preparation for succeeding crops.
Chloris striate mosaic virus, which may also attack Ixophorus unisetus, Dactylis glomerata, Triticum ssp., Avena sativa, Hordeum vulgare, and Zea mays is transmitted by Nesoclutha *(obscura)* pallida *(Cicadellidae)*, and may be carried in the seed.
Insect pests include fall armyworm *(Spodoptera frugiperda)*, larvae of Mocis latipes, *(both Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)*, the lesser corn-stalk borer *(Elasmopalpus lignosellus)*, Rhodes Grass Scale or Rhodes Grass Mealybug *(Antonina graminis)*, chinch bugs *(Hemiptera: Lygaeidae: Blissus spp.)* and the two-lined spittle bug *(Homoptera: Cercopidae:Prosapia bicincta)*. Some of these can severely damage stands if conditions are suitable.

Variety Management/Agronomy

Establishment: Seed of the diploids has little or no post-harvest dormancy, while seed of the tetraploids may not reach maximum germination for 3-6 months (sometimes up to 18 months) after harvest. Seed is best sown on the surface (definitely no deeper than 2 cm) of a well-prepared seedbed, followed by rolling. The fluffy seed tends to "ball" or bridge when planting. For broadcasting, seed is best coated or mixed with sawdust or sand or drilling, it flows more readily if coated. Seed germinates in 1-7 days and seedlings develop rapidly.
Fertiliser: Although Chloris gayana can survive on infertile soil it is very unproductive and may eventually die out, particularly if grazed regularly. Katambora responds to Phosphorus in poorer soils and gives a linear yield and crude protein response of up to 300 kg/ha of Nitrogen, if other nutrients are adequately supplied. Split applications, each of 50-100 kg/ha N, are normally used when economically feasible.
Compatibility (with other species): Katambora grows well with temperate and tropical legumes, by virtue of its open stoloniferous ground cover.
Companion Species:
Grasses: Cenchrus ciliaris , lower growing Panicum maximum cultivars (e.g. Petrie, Gatton), Setaria sphacelata .
Legumes: Centrosema pubescens , Clitoria ternatea , Desmodium uncinatum, Neonotonia wightii , Lotononis bainesii , Macroptilium atropurpureum , Medicago sativa , Stylosanthes guianensis , Trifolium repens.

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Level 1/145 South Terrace Adelaide, SA 5000 **P** 1800 112 400 **F** 1800 677 805 **www.seedmark.com.au**