

# Premier Digit grass

*Digitaria eriantha*

Tropical



400mm+



5.5–8.0



Lighter soil types



AgriCote or bare

This species originates from Africa and was introduced into Australia from South Africa and re-selected for release as Premier. This species is related to Pangola grass *Digitaria decumbens* – a non-seeding type. Used in long-term, permanent pasture for grazing & hay, Premier *Digitaria* is a robust, tufted sub tropical perennial pasture grass growing erect to 150cm or more.

Premier is particularly well adapted to inland environments with lower rainfall and severe Winter frosts. Although the leaves are damaged by frost, it will continue to produce new green leaf in the Winter providing adequate soil moisture is available.

Persistence is a strong feature as it will grow well on a wide range of soils of varying fertility from sandy loams and podzols to cracking clays. Premier has a fair leaf and stem ratio of acceptable quality with good drought, fire, frost and insect resistance.

## Key features

- Highly productive, robust tufted perennial that is palatable and persistent
- Drought, fire and cold tolerant
- Tolerates short-duration heavy grazing by cattle and sheep
- Contains low levels of soluble oxalate

## Establishment

Requires a fine, firm, clean seedbed for establishment, to avoid competition in the early stages. Seed is slightly hairy and may not flow readily through some planting equipment, so the use of AgriCOTE Enhanced seed is recommended.

## Agronomy and management

All genotypes of digit grass are tolerant of heavy grazing. Regular grazing is necessary to maintain quality and to minimise disease incidence with best results if the grass is maintained between 10–15 and 30–40 cm, although this may not be feasible under sheep grazing. Ideally, it should be grazed every 2–3 weeks.

## Performance

DM yields vary with fertility, genotype, and environmental and management conditions, but normally range from about 10–20 t/ha.

## Animal production

An excellent species for beef and milk production. N fertilized pasture can produce >1,000 kg/ha/yr LWG and 6,000 kg/ha/yr milk, with stocking rates of 2.5–7.5 animals/ha.

### Toxicity

No record of toxicity. Contains low levels of soluble oxalate and therefore has low risk of causing oxalate-related animal health problems, i.e. suitable for horses and lactating cows.

## Pest / disease resistance

No major diseases have been found to affect Premier Digitaria. Leaves however can be affected by a rust in humid environments, and seed heads by a false smut during prolonged wet weather.

Insect pests include spittlebugs (*Tomaspis flavopicta*, *T. humeralis*, *Prosapia bicincta*), rhodes grass mealy bug (*Antonina graminis*), chinch bug (*Blissus leucopterus*), sugar-cane aphid (*Sipha flava*), army worms (*Laphigma spp.*, *Spodoptera spp.* and *Mocis spp.*), mole crickets and leafhoppers.

## Suggested sowing rates

Recommended planting rates for AgriCOTE Pro-Tech for Premier Digitaria are:

**Marginal dryland:** 4 – 6kg per hectare

**Good dryland:** 8 – 12kg per hectare

**Irrigated:** 12 – 15kg per hectare

**Sowing depth:** 2 – 3mm



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