

TROPICAL KUDZU

Puero, Kudzu Tropika

Pueraria phaseoloides

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

Tropical Kudzu is native to Malaysia, although it is widely distributed throughout the world in the wet tropics.

Uses

Tropical Kudzu is often used as a nitrogen-fixing green manure or grown as a cover crop in coffee, oil palm, citrus, and rubber plantations. Tropical Kudzu leaves and stems are rich in protein (about 19%) and palatable to livestock and so are used widely as animal fodder. It may also be used as a pasture crop when grown with a suitable grass such as Guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*). The very deep and extensive root system not only provides edible tubers, but also helps minimize soil erosion. The plant's rapid growth also helps suppress weeds and protect the soil from rapid run-off water. The stem contains exceptionally strong fibers which are used in rope-making. Tropical Kudzu is also reported to be a trap crop for *Striga gesnerioides*; it stimulates high germination of the Striga without being a host.

Common Names

- Tagalog
 - Singkamasaso
- Javanese
 - Krandang

Cultivation

Tropical Kudzu is an exceptionally vigorous legume with runners up to 25 ft (8-9 m) long. Propagation is either by seed or cutting, but seeds must be scarified in hot water before planting. Seedlings will grow somewhat slowly (though much faster than other cover crops) for the first 3 to 4 months. Growth is very vigorous once established. Complete establishment and use as a ground cover will require several years of growth. Tropical Kudzu is best adapted to hot and wet conditions. It thrives in areas with an annual rainfall in excess of 1525 mm (60 in). Tropical Kudzu tolerates high water content in the soil—even occasional waterlogging—but also grows well in the dry season, producing an abundance of pods and flowers. It is also tolerant of acid soil and shade.

Harvesting and Seed Production

While Tropical Kudzu is slow to establish, it can be cut repeatedly once established. It grows so well, in fact, that it may need to be grazed or otherwise controlled to keep it from becoming a pest. Usually it is grazed on site in mixed pastures, but it can also be cut for hay, silage, or fresh stall forage.

Pests and Diseases

Tropical Kudzu is remarkably free from diseases and pests, although leaf-eating caterpillars can damage ungrazed sections and pod-borers may reduce seed production.

Cooking and Nutrition

The plant leaves and stems generally are not used for human consumption, although in some countries the plant is used in traditional medicine to cure boils and ulcers. The tuberous roots are edible.

References

http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/forages/Media/Html/entities/pueraria_phaseoloides.htm

<http://ecocrop.fao.org/ecocrop/srv/en/cropView?id=1824>