CENTURION

Centurion Centro

Centrosema pascuorum Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

Centrosema pascuorum occurs natively in arid regions of northern South America including portions of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana and Venezuela and in similar arid to semi-arid regions in Central America. It has been introduced into portions of Australia, Southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Uses

Centurion is a fast growing, relatively palatable, nutritious forage species. It may be used as a hay crop, as a pasture legume or to restore soil nitrogen fertility following sorghum harvest.

Cultivation

Centurion is well adapted to seasonally dry regions of the tropics. The regions suitable for Centurion normally possess a distinct dry period of 4-6 months duration and receive less than 40 inches (1000 mm) annual rainfall. Although Centurion is not frost tolerant, it is drought tolerant. The size of its newly produced leaves becomes progressively smaller during prolonged dry periods. Centurion is adapted to a range of soil types from sands to heavy clays and tolerates a range of pH values from 5 to 8.5.

Two Centurion cultivars have been developed for use in Australian semi-arid environments: 'Cavalcade' and 'Bundey'. Cavalcade Centurion is early flowering and is well-suited to regions having short growing seasons with low wet season rainfall (700-900 mm). Bundey Centurion withstands well the seasonally flooded conditions (1300-1500 mm rainfall) and longer growing season characteristic of Australia's Northern Territory. Centurion is propagated by seeds. A seeding rate of 2-5 lb/acre (2-5 kg/ha) is recommended, at a planting depth of 1/2 to 3/4 in (1-2 cm). Seeds should be planted at the beginning of the wet season in a cultivated seed bed. Hand-harvested seeds have hard seed coats. A heat treatment (in warm water) or seed scarification may be necessary to soften or puncture these hard coats prior to planting. Centurion responds well to seed inoculation with the standard *Centrosema rhizobium* strain, CB 1923, although inoculation often is not necessary. Centurion produces abundant seed and this annual species aggressively self-seeds as the mature pods shatter and forcibly eject the seeds. The seed coats soften naturally by contact with the soil during the dry season following seed release. Weed control among recently planted centurion seedlings is recommended.

Fertilizer additions normally are not required on fertile soils; however, phosphate added at a low rate, for example, 4-5 lbs/acre (4-5 kgs/ha), may increase production significantly on nutrient deficient soils. Those experimenting with Centurion should be aware that it is potentially a weedy species.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Centurion is a valuable dry season forage. Pastures with Centurion may be grazed year-round provided that cattle stocking is kept low enough during the second half of the wet season to allow Centurion seed set. In the semi-arid tropics annual dry matter yields up to 6 t/ha have been obtained in Centurion-dominated pastures. Centurion seed production under favorable conditions may exceed 1 t/ha.

Pests and Diseases

Centurion normally is not threatened seriously by diseases and pests in regions where it is well adapted. Non-resistant strains of Centurion, however, are susceptible to root-knot nematodes. Sucking insect species may reduce seed production, however, this reduction generally is not serious unless the crop is grown for seed production. Leafspot, foliar blight, and anthracnose pathogens have been noted as other centurion problems.

Cooking and Nutrition

Centurion is a forage species. It is not recognized as a human food species.

References

http://ecocrop.fao.org/ecocrop/srv/en/dataSheet?id=4411
http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/forages/Media/Html/entities/centrosema_pascuorum.htm

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