

COMMON STYLO

Tropical Lucerne, Brazilian Lucerne

Stylosanthes guianensis

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Stylosanthes guianensis is an upright, short-lived perennial legume. At maturity, the crop is a deeply taprooted and multi-stemmed sub-shrub. Leaves are trifoliate, and yellow-to-orange flowers are borne on spikes. Flowers give way to one-seeded pods, 2-3 cm long, containing small brown-to-purple seeds.

Uses

S. guianensis is a common forage crop for areas with marked dry seasons. It can be grown as a pasture crop, cut-and-carry, or for hay production. A nitrogen-fixing legume, *S. guianensis* is a versatile green manure cover crop that also intercroops well with other grasses.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Alfalfa brasileña
 - pasto stylo

Cultivation

- **Elevation** – up to 2200 m
- **Rainfall** – 500-5000 mm
- **Soil Types** – pH 4-8.3; tolerates poorly drained to somewhat dry soils
- **Temperature Range** – 15-34°C
- **Day Length Sensitivity** – requires day lengths less than 12 hours to flower
- **Light** – prefers full sun

S. guianensis serves well as a standalone crop or mixed with other forage species, and is commonly intercropped with rice. The small seeds should be broadcast evenly across prepared soil surfaces, and should not be covered or buried because of their small size. Planting time should be integrated with seasonal rains, as moist soil conditions are necessary for establishment. After establishment, *S. guianensis* is hardy and can tolerate rainfall inundation or dry conditions.

Harvesting and Seed Production

S. guianensis is sensitive to heavy grazing, and so requires regular, lengthy rest periods between rotations. As a cut-and-carry, mature stands can be harvested by cutting 20 cm above the ground surface. Mature material is preferred by livestock over juvenile. Allowing the foliage to wilt is recommended to increase palatability. For hay, care should be taken to preserve leaf attachment to the stem during the harvesting and drying processes.

Pests and Diseases

Anthraxnose is a devastating disease of *S. guianensis*, and can be avoided through variety selection. Other diseases and pests include head blight and root knot nematode.

Cooking and Nutrition

Not for human consumption.

References

Ecocrop. 1993-2007. *Secale cereale*. Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, Italy. ecocrop.fao.org/ecocrop/srv/en/dataSheet?id=10146. Accessed 19 July 2019.

Heuzé V., Tran G., Boudon A., Labussière E., Bastianelli D., Lebas F., 2017. *Stylo (Stylosanthes guianensis)*. Feedipedia, a programme by INRA, CIRAD, AFZ and FAO. <https://www.feedipedia.org/node/251>. Accessed 19 July 2019.

"*Stylosanthes guianensis* Aubl." Fact Sheet – *Stylosanthes guianensis*, 2017, http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/forages/Media/Html/entities/stylosanthes_guianensis_var_guianensis.pdf. Accessed 19 July 2019.