

SHRUBBY STYLO

Stylosanthes scabra

Leguminosae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

Shrubby Stylo is of South American origin having spread through Brazil into most tropical countries. ECHO distributes three types of *Stylosanthes*: *S. guianensis*, *S. scabra*, *S. hamata*.

Uses

Shrubby Stylo is a summer-growing pasture legume that is extremely tolerant to drought, poor soil and heavy grazing due to its long taproot. It establishes easily though may not attain much growth until the second season. Its woody, erect stems may be killed by hard frosts or fire but it regrows from dropped seeds or its strong root system. It can be cut for silage or hay when it is young before stems harden.

Cultivation

Shrubby Stylo can be sown at the beginning of the rainy season, 8-12 weeks before first pasturing is planned. It can exist with as little as 600 mm rain but does not do well in heavy soils that hold water. Because it is slow to grow initially, it is often broadcast seeded in a mixture with another stylo variety and native grasses. Because the grasses cannot survive heavy grazing they will often die out when the Shrubby Stylo has become firmly established. It has been grown at elevations as high as 3000 ft. on infertile, acid soils where other forage plants would not thrive.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Shrubby Stylo flowers early in the growing season. If it is cut or grazed to a height of about 6 in, there will be a high feed value of the leaves and flowers. If grown for seed, it should reach 1 m but will regrow if cut down following seed collection. Seeds stay in the flowerhead so that few are lost in harvesting. Before sowing the seeds should be softened by exposure to hot sun or scarifying. Because of their hard seed coat, the seeds stay viable for up to 3 years in the soil or in dry storage.

Pests and Diseases

Anthraxnose, caused by a fungus, has been the greatest threat to healthy crops of Shrubby Stylo but resistant strains have been developed. In cool, wet weather, Botrytis, a leaf disease can be a problem.

Cooking and Nutrition

Sheep and cattle get 12-18% crude protein from the leaves.