

Kikuyu

(*Pennisetum clandestinum*) cv. Whittet

Kikuyu is a robust, creeping, perennial grass with runners above ground. Can grow to a thick mat, up to 1.0m high, but 0.3 to 0.5m tall is optimal i.t.o. grass and animal production.

Kikuyu is a summer growing grass, and in areas with cold winters the production period can be short (5 months). Excellent pasture for dairy cattle and sheep in summer, and a reasonable foggage in winter.

Kikuyu can be established on all soil types, provided the organic matter extent (humus or manure) of the soil is high. Avoid “sorry soils”, as establishment on these soils can take long/slow. P content of the soil should be above 25mg/kg and K content above 100mg/kg.



Production potential of Kikuyu

Annual Precipitation	Suggested Fertilizer N kg/ha	Possible Production DM/ha
500-650mm	75-120kg	6-8ton
1700-1200 irrigation	140-200kg 250ka	12-16ton 18-24ton

Planting date	: In warm months, at least 2 months before winter (Oct – Des)
Seeding rate	: Rows: 1,5 – 3 kg/ha Broadcast: 2 – 4 kg/ha Lawn: 1 – 2g/m ²
Pelleted seed	: Increase seeding rate 30– 50%
Sowing depth	: Onto rolled seedbed, roll again
Tolerance	: Drought – fair Frost – good Water logging – good

Kikuyu is a good pasture for milk production, autumn lambing of ewes, growing out of beef tollies, and is ideal for raising calves on. Kikuyu combines extremely well with ryegrass (Wester World types), clovers (annual – arrow leaf, perennial – red and white) and vetch. Carrying capacity of 5LSU-ha/180 summer days, with live mass grains of 600 to 1100kg/ha (mass correlated to N fertilizer) recorded.

Management – Avoid grazing in Spring, allow pasture to grow to 30cm high before grazing commences.

Use producing animals to “cream” the crop and followers to clean it up. Apply manure of organic matter annually.

HYGROTECH