

RHODESGRASS (CHLORIS GAYANA)

KATAMBORA

OVERVIEW

A tufted perennial which spreads vigorously to form a dense mat. Popular due to its versatility, it is often used for erosion control as with tobacco, due to its nematode resistance and can produce 5-7mt of good quality hay.

Used in permanent pasture or as a short- to medium-term pasture ley to restore soil structure, improve organic matter levels, and reduce nematode numbers. Can also be under sown into maize. Makes good hay if cut at or just before very early flowering. Generally not suitable for silage. Provides fair standover roughage when mature, better than *Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Panicum maximum* due to its greater cold resistance and lower loss of dry leaves. Develops good ground cover and effectively controls erosion once established (needs regular defoliation to maintain cover). Also effectively suppresses woody regrowth provided trees and shrubs are not well established prior to planting the grass.

Some limitations that are faced by this variety include the fact that there is a short nutritive peak in many cultivars and it has fluffy seed that is difficult to sow. It is not adapted to acidic and infertile soils as well as requiring high fertility to persist. It also has a low shade tolerance.

- Widely adapted
- Easily established
- Early nutritive value
- High salt tolerance
- Tolerant of heavy grazing
- Few pests or diseases of economic importance
- Some varieties can suppress nematodes
- Good seed production

