

Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

A. Grasses

6. Panic

Panicum maximum Jacq. (Panic or Guinea grass) cv. Gatton

Reg. No. A-6b-2

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Origin

This variety was derived from a sample of seed introduced by CSIR (C.P.I. 6563) in 1936 from the Department of Agriculture, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. It performed well in trials at the Cooper Laboratory, CSIRO, Lawes, Qld., over the period of 1956-64. It was recommended for commercial utilization by Mr. L.A. Edye, CSIRO, and named and released by the Queensland Pasture Liaison Committee in 1964.

Morphological description (1)

In plant form and habit Gatton is a "medium" type of *Panicum maximum*. It is less robust and not as coarse as c. Hamil but more robust than Petrie green panic. Its culms grow to about 1.5m, have clearly defined and glabrous nodes, and are not as hirsute as those of ordinary Guinea grass or green panic. The inflorescence is 18-20 cm long and 15-18 cm wide at the lowest primary branch and the lower branches are usually whorled. The spikelets are 2.6-2.9 mm long. Other features are the same as described for cv. Hamil. Compared with Petrie green panic, cv. Gatton has broader and longer leaves with a more prominent midrib and more strongly scabrid margins; its leaf sheaths are finely pubescent rather than villose; its ligule consists of a ring of short straight bristles rather than of long downy hairs; and its spikelets are glabrous.

Agronomic characters (1, 2)

Cv. Gatton is adapted to subtropical and tropical areas receiving between 760-1000 mm of rain annually and, thus, to much the same environment as green panic. It is said to be little more vigorous, drought resistant, and persistent as well as more palatable than Petrie green panic. It appears also to utilize soil nitrogen better and has a longer growing season. It is probably predominantly apomictic (3); seed yield is of the same order as that obtained from Petrie.

References

1. Edye, L.A. (1967). Personal communication. Pastoral Res. Lab., Div. Trop. Pastures, CSIRO, Townsville, Qld.
2. Ostrowski, H. (1966). Tropical pastures for the Brisbane district. *Qd agric. J.* **92**, 106-16.
3. Warmke, H.E. (1954). Apomixis in *Panicum maximum*. *Am. J. Bot.* **41**, 5-11.