

Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

A. Grasses

12. Buffel

Cenchrus ciliaris L. (buffel grass) cv. Gayndah

Reg. No. A-12a-7

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Origin

Derived from a small sample of seed (C.P.I.1848) introduced in 1930 from the Scott Laboratories at Nairobi in Kenya. Seed was multiplied and in 1934 the Division of Plant Industry, CSIRO, included it in 12 pasture species sent to the then Queensland Department of Public Instruction for use in school "hobby plots". In the grounds of the Gayndah State School this cultivar became dominant; F.L. Rasmussen, the teacher, encouraged children to collect seed, which was distributed to local farmers. W.R. Gordon and J. Sandford established the grass on extensive areas of their Gayndah properties; C.J. Pinwell subsequently acquired the property of J. Sandford, which became the principal source of cv. Gayndah seed.

Morphological description (3,5,et al.)

This cultivar has a semi-prostrate to ascending habit, the culms which grow to about 1 m in height arising from short prostrate stems. It is not rhizomatous and differs from Biloela in being of more prostrate habit, not as tall, in having smaller and green leaves, stems which are longer and thinner, shorter internodes, and greater tiller density. The stems have 11-18 nodes. The leaf blade at its maximum width is as wide or wider than the unrolled leaf sheath at its mid point; and the leaf sheaths have ciliate margins with long hairs scattered away from the margins. The ligule is 1.3-1.5 mm long. The peduncle is rough for some distance below the inflorescence. The spikelets are pallid to red in colour and loosely packed on the rachis; the inner bristles of the involucre are united for only 0.1-0.2 mm. Its seed fascicles are smaller but more numerous than Biloela.

Agronomic characters

This variety has much the same adaptation as Biloela but because of its lower height, greater leafiness, and smaller leaves has gained favour as a component of sheep pastures (1). It has shown better compatibility with Townsville stylo than cv. Biloela (9) and is widely used in inland areas, especially in brigalow (2) and gidyea (1,10) forest country. Successful use has also been reported from Trangie, N.S.W. (5), and from south-western Queensland (11). The seedling drought resistance of cv. Gayndah is better than that of cv. West Australian, and it is later-flowering. It has shown considerable resistance to heavy grazing (6,8) and has given high stock production (12).

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