

Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

A. Grasses

13. Rhodes

Chloris gayana Kunth. (Rhodes grass) cv. Katambora

Reg. No. A-13a-2

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Origin

This cultivar was derived from seed of a naturally occurring ecotype, collected on the Northern Rhodesian bank of the Zambesi River at Katambora by West and Schwim (7). Here it occurred in pure stands in open glades adjoining the Riverine Forest under an annual rainfall of approximately 610 mm of summer incidence and high day and night temperatures with no frosts (7). It proved one of the best lines tested at the Matopos Research Station (7).

First introduced into Australia in 1951 (C.P.I.13375), and subsequently in 1953 (C.P.I.18021) and 1954 (C.P.I.18708). It was tested by CSIRO at Samford, Qld. (6), and subsequently at various locations in Queensland and northern New South Wales (4,5) by other institutions. Submitted and recommended for registration by the New South Wales Herbage Plant Liaison Committee. Registered September 1967.

Morphological description (1,6)

Cv. Katambora is a diploid with 20 chromosomes, like Pioneer. Compared with that cultivar it has a more vigorous stoloniferous habit and its stolons are relatively thin and long; it does not tend to become so tussocky. Its leaves are narrower and finer (3-4 mm). Its culms are also finer and usually up to 20 spikes are formed in the inflorescence; it is later maturing. It is probably apomictic, there being less variation in morphological characters than in other Rhodes grass cultivars. Bogdan (2) reports 75% of plants of a population to be identical, but seems doubtful whether this is due to apomixis (3).

Agronomic characters

In South Africa this cultivar was developed on the basis of its better drought tolerance and very rapid growth rates compared with other varieties (2).

In Queensland it flowers from January to May and its flowering period is therefore later and more restricted than that of Pioneer (6). Its spring and summer yields are reported significantly higher than those of Pioneer (6), although its frost tolerance may not be as good. Its stronger stoloniferous habit is reported to make it more persistent under grazing (6).

In New South Wales it has been grown successfully at Crooble in the north-west (5); but at many other trial locations its early-season vigour and yields have been inferior to Pioneer, its late-season vigour comparable or better, and its persistence poorer (1). The cooler spring, shorter growing season, and cooler autumn of the trial locations possibly account for its poorer performance (5). At Inverell and Gunnedah, because of its late maturity, it has, in all but the most favourable seasons, produced little viable seed (4).

Soil adaptability and ease of establishment are similar to Pioneer. Other agronomic characters such as palatability are also similar to Pioneer (1).

References

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