

Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

A. Grasses

9. Forage Sorghum

Sorghum vulgare Pers. (sweet sorghum) cv. Sugardrip

Reg. No. A-9b-3

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Origin

The name Sugardrip was given to this type of sweet sorghum by Vinall et al. (8) and it was registered in the U.S.A. in 1936 (1). Previously this type had been known by a number of names and the name Sugardrip applied to a number of different types (8). It is similar to, but not synonymous with the Sugardrip described by Snowden (7) under the classification *Sorghum caffrorum* Beauv. var. *sapindum* Snowden Form 1.

Material under this name was introduced by the New South Wales Department of Agriculture in 1926 (2) and by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock before 1941 (5). Early trials in New South Wales were not promising and the cultivar was not grown commercially (2). In 1961 a further introduction was made by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock and it proved very similar to, but a few days later in flowering than the original introduction (4). In 1961 also, Sugardrip appeared in the north-west of New South Wales, seed apparently being obtained by landowners from Queensland. It gave good results as a grazing crop (2).

Morphological description (6, 8)

Cv. Sugardrip is similar to Saccaline in its main morphological characters including height and degree of tillering. It is, however, much less inclined to develop stem branches and is generally leafier. Stems are juicy and very sweet. Inflorescence, approximately same size as in Saccaline, is irregularly cylindrical and of medium density, with rachis branches appressed but not as short as in Sumac. Glumes small, black, and almost hairless; lemmas not awned. Seeds are brown and small, rounded on top and pointed at the base rather than elliptical as in Saccaline; well exposed and extending well beyond the apices of the glumes. The seed can normally be distinguished from that of Saccaline by the slight difference in shape and generally lighter shade of colour. The endosperm is starchy and a brown nucellar layer is present.

Agronomic characters (2,4,6)

Cv. Sugardrip is late-maturing and usually takes 5-7 days longer to flower than Saccaline, i.e. 85-87 days in central coastal Queensland. It is leafier than Saccaline and capable of giving forage yields as high as Saccaline, and the fodder is often more attractive. It stands well and does not lodge as readily, nor is it as prone to leaf disease as Saccaline and Sumac. Its region of adaptation in Queensland tends to be more that of the central than southern coastal areas.

In New South Wales its stems are considered a little softer and sweeter than the more popular varieties Saccaline and Early Orange. While it has probably been less susceptible to disease than Early Orange its yield has not been any higher. Under irrigation in northern Victoria it appears to be less productive than Saccaline if cut at regular intervals but more productive if cut once at maturity (3).

References

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