

# Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

## A. Grasses

### 9. Forage Sorghum

#### *Sorghum vulgare* Pers. (sweet sorghum) cv. Sumac

Reg. No. A-9b-2

Registered prior to December 1971

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#### Origin

Sumac was introduced to the U.S.A. from Natal, South Africa, by Leonard Wray in 1857 (5). It has been classified by Snowden (4) as *Sorghum nigricans* (Ruis et Pavon) Snowden var. *angolense* (Rendle) Snowden Form 1 under the names Sumach and Sumac. It was the most important sweet sorghum in the U.S.A. during the 1930-40 period and was registered there in 1936 (1).

A number of introductions of this variety were made from the U.S.A. by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock, and it has been grown in Queensland probably since 1923, but never to a great extent. It was introduced by the New South Wales Department of Agriculture in 1925 from Chillicothe, Texas (2). It did not yield as well as Saccaline in early N.S.W. trials, although some selection work was recorded at Bathurst Experiment Farm in 1930. It has never been extensively grown in N.S.W. (2). Early Sumac, an early maturing selection from Sumac, has also been introduced to Australia but not extensively grown (2,3).

#### Morphological description (3-5)

This is a tall variety, similar to Saccaline in its main morphological characteristics. Inflorescence a small, erect, relatively short, compact panicle with rachis branches short and appressed. Glumes small, elliptic to ovate, black to reddish brown, with a few hairs; lemmas not awned. Seed approximately 44,000 per kg, obovoid to globose and plump, reddish brown, very well exposed and extending well beyond the apices of the glumes; the endosperm is starchy and a brown nucellar layer is present. It is distinguished from Saccaline by its more compact heads which are well filled with darker and more globose grain and by its slightly lighter-coloured glumes.

#### Agronomic characters (2, 3)

The area of adaptation of cv. Sumac is very much the same as that of Saccaline. It is a tall late-maturing variety with the same time to flowering as Saccaline. Like Saccaline it lodges badly and is very subject to leaf disease.

#### References

1. Anon. (1936). Varietal standardisation and registration. *J. Am. Soc. Agron.* **28**, 1027-8.
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3. Queensland Department of Primary Industries (1964). Sorghum in Queensland. 2. *Qd. Agric. J.* **90**, 157-66.
4. Snowden, J.D. (1936). "The Cultivated Races of Sorghum." 274 pp. (Adlard & Son Ltd., London).
5. Vinall, H.N., Stephens, J.C., and Martin, J.H. (1936). Identification, history and distribution of common sorghum varieties. U.S.D.A. tech. Bull. No. 506.