

# Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

## A. Grasses

### 12. Buffel

#### *Cenchrus ciliaris* L. (buffel grass) cv. West Australian

Reg. No. A-12a-8

Registered prior to December 1971

*Published in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars 1972*

#### Origin

This variety was first observed at Wallal, on the north-west coast of Western Australia, where it is believed to have been accidentally introduced between 1870 and 1880 in Afghan camel harness (6). In 1910, J. Moore brought seed from Wallal to Port Hedland, where its spread was systematically encouraged. It was aerielly seeded on Mundabullangana Station in 1926 (8).

#### Morphological description (2 et al.)

This variety is a non-rhizomatous, tussocky, short type, growing 45-75 cm high with dense fine-leaved tillers. The stems have 5-8 nodes, the leaf blade is narrower than the sheath, and the ligule is about 0.7 mm long. The leaf sheath margins are ciliate; the peduncle rough for some distance below the inflorescence. The bristles of the involucre are intensely purple, except when young, and the inner bristles are united for about 0.6-0.7 mm. The seed fascicles are about 7 mm long.

#### Agronomic characters

It is very early-flowering (4) and not as vigorous as the taller varieties. Because of its earlier seed set it is better suited to lower rainfall areas. Its short habit and dense fine-leaved tillers make it suitable for sheep grazing. It has been successfully grown in north-west Australia (5,9) but has lost favour in Queensland, being out-yielded by other cultivars in areas with 400-430 mm annual rainfall (1,10). It is responsive to nutrients (3) and a higher intake and feeding value than cv. Biloela have been recorded (7). Its seed requires longer storage and may respond to moist chilling in contrast to other varieties tested (3).

#### References

1. Bisset, W.J. (1964). Try buffel and green panic with brigalow pastures. *Qd. Agric. J.* **90**, 129-30.
2. Blake, S.T. (1967). Personal communication. Herbarium, Botanic Gdns, Brisbane.
3. Edye, L.A., Humphreys, L.R., Henzell, E.F., and Teakle, L.J.H. (1964). Pasture investigations in the Yalleroi district of central Queensland. *Pap. Fac. Agric. Univ. Qd.* **1**(4), 153.
4. Humphreys, L.R. (1967). Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris* L.) in Australia. *Trop. Grassl.* **1**(2), 123-34.
5. Mallet, J.A. (1955). Tackling the problems of the spinifex areas. *J. Agric. West. Aust.* **4** (N.S.), 265-79.
6. Marriott, S.J. (1955). Buffel grass. *J. Aust. Inst. Agric. Sci.* **21**, 277-8.
7. Milford, R. (1960). Nutritional values for 17 subtropical grasses. *Aust. J. Agric. Res.* **11**, 138-48.
8. Nunn, W.M. (1954). Buffel grass - what it has done for Mundabullangana. *J. Agric. West. Aust.* **3** (N.S.), 27-31.
9. Nunn, W.M. (1958). Pasture regeneration in east Kimberleys. *J. Agric. West. Aust.* **7** (N.S.), 23-6.
10. Suijgendorp, H. (1953). Buffel and Birdwood grasses. Two useful perennials. *J. Agric. West. Aust.* **2** (N.S.), 492-3.