GROW GUATEMALA GRASS FOR INCREASED MILK YIELD

IN AREAS PRONE TO NAPIER STUNT DISEASE


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Introduction
Guatemala grass is a fodder that grows well in areas where Napier grass and other fodders do well. It is an alternative fodder crop that withstands Napier stunt and head smut diseases. It can be fed to livestock to increase milk production.

Where to grow Guatemala grass
Guatemala grows well in mid- to high altitude areas of western Kenya.

Source of planting material
• KARI Centres
• Ministry of Agriculture
• Farmers who grow the grass

How to plant Guatemala grass
• Cut root splits to 20-30 cm
• Plant one root split per hole
• Apply either one soda bottle-top per hole (one bag TSP/DAP per acre) of TSP or DAP fertiliser at the rate of or 2 handfuls of FYM/compost manure at the rate of per hole per acre at planting
• Cover with soil firmly

How to manage Guatemala grass
• Weed whenever weeds appear
• Harvest by cutting
• First harvest at 3-4 months after planting
• Maintain a stubble height of 10 cm to encourage quick re-growth
• Subsequently harvest at 6-8 week (1½-2 month) intervals
• After every 2nd harvest, apply 2-3 bottle-tops of CAN per stool or 2 bags per acre, or apply 2 handfuls of FYM/compost per stool (4 tonnes FYM/compost per acre)

How to utilise Guatemala grass
• Well-managed Guatemala grass produces 5-7 tonnes of dry matter per acre in a year. This is enough to feed one dairy cow per year
• Harvest and chop to 2-3 cm pieces and feed fresh to livestock
• When plenty, make silage for dry season feeding

Advantages of Guatemala grass
• Not infected by Napier stunt or Napier head smut diseases
• Grows well in many regions of Kenya
• Easily rotated with other crops
• Produces high forage (75%) of the forage produced by Bana Napier variety