

Sorghum is a traditional crop in the South and can be used as a summer cover crop. It is a drought tolerant and can be used alone or in a cover crop mix. Sorghums are quick growing grasses that can suppress weeds and penetrate compacted soils with extensive root systems. Sorghum is very susceptible to infestation by white sugarcane aphids, which is limiting its use. There are big differences in biomass between grain and silage hybrid sorghum varieties. The silage hybrids are more useful as cover crops. Issues with southern root knot nematodes vary with location and sorghum variety. Consult your local Extension, NRCS, and state Pest Management Handbook. Do not use in front of corn or other monocot crops. Can be used in front of cotton and soybean.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Common Sterile	Good biomass.	Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center data
Egyptian wheat	High biomass, very tall, late maturity. Similar growth to sorghum-sudangrass hybrids. Can get woody. Seed grown in south.	

Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	½ - 1	Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	15 - 20	Georgia Forages
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	25 - 30 Check with your state’s wildlife resources department to ensure compliance with dove hunting regulations if fields will be hunted.	Georgia Forages
Aerial Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	Not recommended.	Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool

Termination Information

Information	Source
Sorghum can be terminated by mowing, herbicides, and tillage. It will also winterkill. Termination timing depends on the following cash crop. It is usually terminated with herbicides if wheat is the following cash crop.	Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool; Clemson University
Sorghum is attractive to migrating birds. Check with your state’s wildlife resources department to ensure compliance with dove hunting regulations, if fields will be hunted.	
Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	

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Cultural Traits

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	4,000 - 12,000	Late summer plantings can produce significant biomass before frost.	Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center data, Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	0		Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Life Cycle	Summer annual grass		Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Growth Habit	Upright		Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Preferred Soil pH	5.5 – 6.5		Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Relative Seed Cost (\$/acre)	\$\$\$		Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	65°		Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
Cautions	Prussic acid poisoning during drought stress can be a danger to cattle. Severe infestations of sugarcane aphids can occur. Has exudates that can inhibit the growth of many other plant species. Can reseed if not terminated early enough and reseeded can become a weed issue. Check with your state's wildlife resources department on how hunting regulations may affect planting and management.		USDA Sorghum Plant Guide; Clemson University

Sources:

Georgia Forages: <http://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/>

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center Annual Reports:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ga/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_022076

Midwest Cover Crop Council Selector Tool - Missouri data: <http://mccc.msu.edu/covercroptool/infosheet.php>

USDA Sorghum Plant Guide: https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_sobi2.pdf