

Sorghum-sudangrass
(*Sorghum bicolor* x *S. bicolor*)

Sorghum sudangrass has been widely used as a cover crop in the South. It has the highest production potential of all the summer cover crops. It is heat and drought tolerant and an excellent scavenger of nutrients, and is also used to help control summer weeds such as Palmer amaranth. It is very susceptible to white sugarcane aphid, which reduces the amount of biomass produced. Farmer experience indicates it may work better in a cover crop mixture to reduce sugarcane aphid pressure. Sorghum sudangrass suppresses many nematodes including root-knot nematodes.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Honey Graze	Brown Midrib (BMR) variety that produces good biomass.	Jimmy Carter and Jamie Whitten Plant Materials Centers data

Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	½ - 1 ½	Georgia Forages
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	15 - 20	Georgia Forages
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	25 - 30	Georgia Forages
Aerial Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	Not recommended.	

Termination Information

Information	Source
Sorghum sudangrass can be terminated by mowing, herbicides, and tillage. It will also winter kill. It can become very woody as it matures and heavy equipment may be needed to manage the residue. Termination timing depends on the following cash crop. It is usually terminated with herbicides if wheat is the following cash crop. Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

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Cultural Traits

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	8,000 - 10,000	Much higher dry matter range with irrigation.	Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center data, Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	0		
Life Cycle	Summer annual grass	Late summer plantings can make considerable biomass before frost.	
Growth Habit	Upright		
Preferred Soil pH	6.0 - 7.0	Not as acid tolerant as millets	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Relative Seed Cost (\$/acre)	\$\$\$		Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	65°		
Cautions	Severe infestations of sugarcane aphids can occur. Has exudates that can inhibit the growth of many other plant species. If it is winterkilled or under drought stress, prussic acid can accumulate and create problems for grazing. Can reseed if not terminated early enough and reseeding can become a weed issue. Mature biomass has a very high C:N ratio; mixing with a legume such as cowpea can mitigate possible nitrogen immobilization.		

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

Managing Cover Crops Profitably: <https://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books>