

Sorghum is a traditional crop in the South and can be used as a summer cover crop. It is 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 forage/silage hybrids are more useful as cover crops. Brown midrib varieties are preferred for grazing systems.

### Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Common Sterile	Good biomass.	Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center data
4Ever Green, F73FS10, F74FS23 BMR, F76FS77, SP2774 BMR, SP2876 BMR	Varieties rated as good yields with fair resistance to sugarcane aphid	Georgia Forages
Egyptian wheat	High biomass, very tall, late maturity. Can get woody. Seed grown in south. Not usually used for grazing.	

### 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

### Termination Information

Information	Source
Sorghum can be terminated by heavy grazing. Sorghum can also 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. 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.	Midwest Cover Crops Council Selector Tool
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

**Forage Traits**

Information	Source
<p>Forage sorghums are high yield producers and, depending on variety and maturity stage, they may have from 0 – 50% grain in the forage. It can be grazed or harvested as baleage or silage. Although it can be used for hay production, it can be more difficult to dry than other summer annuals. Highest digestibility is usually obtained by harvesting in the vegetative growth stage, while yield will increase from more mature plants. Harvesting in the late grain dough stage will result in a lower average TDN value, but will maximize the amount of TDN harvested per acre. Brown midrib varieties are preferred as a forage source due to the lower lignin and higher digestibility than other varieties. Grazing sorghum can be a challenge because of plant height.</p> <p>Sorghum might contain toxic levels of nitrates and prussic acid under stress conditions (drought, frost/freeze, etc.). Horses should not be fed forage from the sorghum family.</p> <p>If crops are grazed instead of harvested as grain, check that all pesticides applied to the crop are labeled for grazing livestock.</p>	Georgia Forages

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### Sources:

Georgia Forages: <https://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/species-and-varieties/warm-season/sorghums.html>

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center Annual Reports:

[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ga/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2\\_022076](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](https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_sobi2.pdf)