

FarmLens Ltd

Website: farmlens.africa | App: app.farmlens.africa | Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya



Crop details

Brachiaria grass

Urochloa/Brachiaria spp.

Family: Poaceae

Categories

Forages & Fodder

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Quick stats

Family	Poaceae
Typical harvest	25.3 t/ha
Varieties	3
Pests and diseases	4
Seasons	2

Crop profile

Growth habit	perennial
Days to harvest	120-365+
Main uses	Forage; pasture/hay
Pollination	wind
Origin and where it grows	Africa; tropics

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	20 - 30 °C
Rainfall	800 - 1400 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 1800 m
Best pH	5.5 - 6.5
Soil type	Well-drained; tolerates low fertility
Row spacing	75 cm
Plant spacing	50 cm
Planting depth	2 cm
Seed rate	8 kg/ha

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is perennial; once planted it can keep producing for many years. Harvest typically starts about 120-365+ days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for forage; pasture/hay.

Pollination: Mainly wind; healthy flowers and pollinators improve fruit set.

Where it grows: Africa; tropics. Grouped under: Forages & Fodder.

Best climate: 20 - 30 °C; 800 - 1400 mm/yr; up to about 1800 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 5.5 - 6.5; well-drained; tolerates low fertility.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

<u>Planting</u>	Plant at onset of rains. For splits, plant 1–2 tillers per station in moist soil; for seed, drill/shallow cover and firm soil. Control weeds during establishment.
<u>Transplanting</u>	Not typical; use vegetative splits or direct seeding.
<u>Irrigation</u>	Ensure moisture during establishment and after each cut; avoid waterlogging.
<u>Fertigation</u>	If irrigated, supply N in small doses after cuts to boost regrowth.
<u>Pest scouting</u>	Scout for spittlebugs and leaf spots; maintain field hygiene and balanced nutrition.
<u>Pruning and training</u>	Cut at 15–20 cm stubble to protect crowns and encourage tillering.
<u>Harvest</u>	First cut ~8–10 weeks after establishment; subsequent cuts every 4–6 weeks at 30–40 cm height or early boot stage.
<u>Postharvest</u>	For hay, wilt to ~85% DM before baling. For silage, chop 2–3 cm and ensile at ~30–35% DM.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 15-15-15	100 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K? O: N/A	Band or broadcast & incorporate lightly
2	After 1st cut	60	CAN 26% N	80 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K? O: N/A	Irrigate or apply on wet soil to reduce loss
3	After subsequent cuts	100	CAN 26% N + MOP	80 kg/ha + 40 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K? O: N/A	Adjust to biomass removal and soil tests

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	20	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress	40	kg/ha
N	Maintenance	40	kg/ha
K?O	Maintenance	30	kg/ha

Field images



Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Mulato II	KE	150	High quality forage
Mulato II (Urochloa hybrid)	KE	90	Tolerant to spittlebugs; high DM yield; good regrowth
Cayman (BR02/1794)	KE	90	High yield; drought tolerance; good quality

Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	DAP 18-46-0	60	Reduce if soil P is high
After cut	CAN 26% N	80	Apply after rains or light irrigation
After cut	MOP (KCl)	40	Support stand persistence and disease tolerance

Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Spittlebugs	pest	Foamy masses; yellowing	Resistant cultivars; grazing management
Spittlebugs (Aeneolamia/Zulia spp.)	pest	Foamy masses, yellowing, stunting	Use tolerant cultivars (e.g., Mulato II); maintain stand vigor; spot treatments if severe
Armyworms (sporadic)	pest	Leaf defoliation	Early detection; targeted control if thresholds exceeded
Leaf spot / blight	disease	Necrotic lesions reducing leaf area	Avoid dense shade; balanced K; timely cutting and residue management

Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
pasture/cut	40	20	70	Fresh biomass/year
rained cut-and-carry	14	8	20	Annual biomass (DM) across multiple cuts
irrigated/intensive	22	15	30	Annual biomass (DM) with good fertility

Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	High- & mid-altitudes (long rains)	Mar–Apr	First cut May–Jun; then 4–6 wk intervals
KE	High- & mid-altitudes (short rains)	Oct–Nov	First cut Dec–Jan; then 4–6 wk intervals

Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Dairy belts	High
KE	Highlands & mid-altitudes	High
KE	Waterlogged valleys	Low
TZ	Northern & Lake zones	High
UG	Central & Western	High

Source: **FarmLens Ltd** - farmlens.africa and app.farmlens.africa. Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya. This guide was generated from the FarmLens database.