

FarmLens Ltd

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



Crop details

Sudan grass

Sorghum × drummondii (sudangrass)

Family: Poaceae

Categories

Forages & Fodder

Generated: 2026-03-14 14:33

Quick stats

Family	Poaceae
Typical harvest	26.7 t/ha
Varieties	2
Pests and diseases	7
Seasons	3

Crop profile

Growth habit	annual
Days to harvest	60–110
Main uses	Forage (grazing, green chop, hay); cover crop; silage
Pollination	wind
Origin and where it grows	Warm-season grass; grown in tropics/subtropics and warm temperate zones

Weather, soil and spacing

Best temperature	24 - 34 °C
Rainfall	450 - 800 mm/yr
Altitude	0 - 1800 m
Best pH	6 - 7.2
Soil type	Well-drained loam/sandy loam; tolerates light soils
Row spacing	30 cm
Plant spacing	10 cm
Planting depth	2.5 cm
Seed rate	20 kg/ha

Simple notes for farmers

About the crop: This crop is annual; it grows and is harvested in one season. Harvest typically starts about 60–110 days after planting.

Main use: Farmers mostly grow this crop for forage (grazing, green chop, hay); cover crop; silage.

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

Where it grows: Warm-season grass; grown in tropics/subtropics and warm temperate zones. Grouped under: Forages & Fodder.

Best climate: 24 - 34 °C; 450 - 800 mm/yr; up to about 1800 m a.s.l.

Soil: Best at pH 6 - 7.2; well-drained loam/sandy loam; tolerates light soils.

Farmer guide (Mwongozo wa Mkulima)

<u>Planting</u>	Sow into warm, moist seedbed after onset of rains or with irrigation; roll/firm for good contact.
<u>Transplanting</u>	Not transplanted.
<u>Irrigation</u>	Drought-tolerant but highest yields with timely moisture; avoid saturation.
<u>Fertigation</u>	Grasses respond to N; split N 2–3 times; ensure K and S for regrowth.
<u>Pest scouting</u>	Scout early for shoot fly/armyworms and leaf diseases; manage weeds aggressively in first 4–6 weeks.
<u>Pruning and training</u>	Not applicable; manage by cutting height and intervals.
<u>Harvest</u>	First cut at 45–60 DAS (50–70 cm height) or early boot; leave 10–15 cm stubble for regrowth.
<u>Postharvest</u>	For hay, wilt rapidly to safe moisture; for silage, chop at 30–35% DM; avoid nitrate/prussic acid risks.

Nutrient schedule (Mbolea kwa Hatua)

#	Stage	DAP	Product	Rate	Targets (kg/ha)	Notes
1	Basal	0	NPK 17-17-17	100 kg/ha	N: N/A, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Place below/aside seed to avoid burn
2	Tillering topdress	25	Urea 46% N or CAN 26% N	80 kg/ha	N: 40, P?O?: N/A, K?O: N/A	Irrigate or apply before rain
3	After 1st cut	55	Urea 46% N + MOP (KCl)	80 kg/ha (urea) + 60 kg/ha MOP	N: 40, P?O?: N/A, K?O: 30	Broadcast evenly on moist soil

Nutrient requirements

Nutrient	Stage	Amount	Unit
N	Basal	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Basal	25	kg/ha
K?O	Basal	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress	40	kg/ha
N	Topdress1	40	kg/ha
P?O?	Topdress1	0	kg/ha
K?O	Topdress1	30	kg/ha
N	After_cut	40	kg/ha
P?O?	After_cut	0	kg/ha
K?O	After_cut	30	kg/ha

Field images



Varieties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Maturity (days)</u>	<u>Traits</u>
Local Sudan grass	KE	70	Rapid regrowth; multi-cut
Piper type	TZ	75	Fine stems; good hay

Fertilizer recommendations

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Basal	NPK 17-17-17	100	
Topdress	Urea 46% N (or CAN)	80	Split after emergence and after cuts
After cut	MOP (KCl)	60	Supports regrowth and stand persistence

Pests and diseases

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Management</u>
Sorghum midge	pest	Poor seed set	Early planting; tolerant types
Armyworms/cutworms	pest	Defoliation; stand loss	Early scouting; baits/controls if thresholds exceeded
Shoot fly	pest	Deadhearts in seedlings	Timely sowing; seed treatment; replant gaps
Stem borers	pest	Tunneling; broken stems	Stubble management; rotations; biological controls
Leaf spot/rust	disease	Spots/pustules on leaves	Resistant lines; airflow; timely protectants if severe
Smut/ergot (sorghum)	disease	Black sori; sticky exudate	Clean seed; crop hygiene; rotation
Sorghum midge (in seed)	pest	Poor grain in seed production	Synchronize flowering; avoid volunteer hosts

Yields

<u>System</u>	<u>Typical</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Notes</u>
cut-and-carry	30	15	50	Fresh biomass
rained forage	15	8	25	Fresh biomass per cut; 2–3 cuts possible (site-dependent)
irrigated forage	35	20	60	Cumulative fresh biomass across multiple cuts

Season calendars

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Planting</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
KE	Lowlands & mid-altitudes (long rains)	Mar–Apr	May–Sep
KE	Lowlands & mid-altitudes (short rains)	Oct–Nov	Dec–Apr
TZ	Central semi-arid (with showers/irrig.)	Dec–Jan	Feb–Jun

Region suitability

<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
KE	Cool highlands (>2000 m)	Low
KE	Lowlands & mid-altitudes	High
KE	Lowlands/Semi-arid	High
TZ	Central semi-arid (irrigated)	High
UG	Dry savanna	Medium

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