

HYBRID NAPIER: *A Perennial Fodder Crop*

The hybrid Napier for fodder is highly valued for its abundant herbage yield, palatability and good herbage quality. It contains 8.7-10.2% CP, 28-30.5% crude fibre and 10-11.5% ash on dry matter basis. It provides nutritious and palatable fodder all the year round

Climate: It grows in areas with rainfall of over 1000 mm but it cannot tolerate the flooding /water logging. The optimum temperature is 31^o C but it performs well in areas having temperatures above 15^o C. It is a tropical grass which can withstand drought for a short spell and regenerate with rains.

Suitable soils: It can grow on almost all type and fertility status of soils but being exhaustive species, well drained clay loam soils are preferred. The crop can bear soils acidity to limited extent (pH-5.5).

Land preparation: It is a long duration crop, hence periodical tillage activities like other crops are not possible after the crop occupies the field. Generally 2-3 ploughing followed by planking is required to obtain the fine tilth.

Seeds & sowing: It is propagated by stem cuttings with two buds called rooted slips. About 25000 to 40000 rooted slips or stem cuttings/ha with a spacing of 70x50 cm for sole cropping and 100x50 cm for intercropping are needed. Under rainfed conditions July-August planting is preferred. Stem cuttings are placed into the soil at an angle of 45^o, so that one node is pushed into the soil and one remains above the soil surface.

Improved varieties: IGFRI Hybrid napier No. 3, 6 and 10, Pusa Giant & NB 21, Co 1, Co 2, Co 3 and Co 4, PBN 83, APVN-1.

Fertilizers and Manure: Apply NPK fertilizers as per soil test values along with recommended FYM/compost. In absence of soil test results, 20-25 t FYM and basal dose of 60kg N, 50 kg P₂O₅ and 40kg K₂O/ha should be applied in bunds prior to planting. Subsequently 20kg and 10kg N should respectively be top dressed just after and 20 days after the cut. Alternatively, the crop may be fertilized with 40 kg N just after the cut.

Inter cultivation: The gap filling may be done after 20 days of planting. Regular hand weeding/hoeing and ensures good aeration and crop growth as well as control weed growth.

Irrigation: The crop should be planted in well moist soil condition. The crop needs regular irrigation at an interval of 15-18 days in March to May, at 10-12 days interval I summer months. During monsoon seasons the irrigation is rarely needed in event of long monsoon failure.

Harvesting: Green forage yield 1000-1700 q/ha. First cut at 60-65 days after planting and subsequent cuts are obtained at 25-30 days interval. At least 6-8 cuts are possible annually. The APVN-1 (for souther India) maximum green fodder yield 2600-2950 q/ha. In order to encourage quicker regeneration from the basal buds, stubbles of 10-15 cm are to be left out at harvest.

For detail information please contact to:-

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