

# PEARL MILLET

- **Fast root development**
- **Rapid growth and regrowth (faster than sorghum x sudan grass)**
- **Needs about 30% less H<sup>2</sup>O than sorghum products**
- **Does well in hot temperatures**
- **Tolerates low soil pH better than sorghum**

## Description:

Growing pearl millet is similar to sorghum. Plant in early summer in warm soil. Height can vary from 3 - 6 ft depending on variety and growing conditions. Pearl millet develops into a mature seed 30 days after pollination.

Pearl millet yields best on fertile, well drained soils, but performs relatively well on sandy soils in acidic soil conditions, if moisture and fertility are low. Generally speaking, pearl millet can be grown in areas where sorghum is planted, though it tends towards greater drought resistance.

## Non-Forage Benefits:

1 = Poor; 5 = Excellent

- **Compaction Alleviation:** 3
- **Weed Suppression:** 5
- **Biomass Production:** 5
- **Erosion Control:** 4
- **Disease/Pest Control:** 4
- **Pollinator/Beneficials:** 3
- **P & K Cycling:** 3
- **Ease of Establishment:** 5

**Planting Time:** May - Aug

## Seeding Rate:

**Mono (lbs./acre):** 20 - 30

**Mix (lbs./acre):** 5 - 20

**Forage (lbs./acre):** 20 - 30

## Seeding Info:

**Carbon/Nitrogen Ratio (C:N):** 12:1-20:1

**Seeding Depth (in./with drill):** 1/2-1

**Seeds/lb.:** 60,000

**Bulk Density (lbs./ft.<sup>3</sup>):** 42

**Aerial Application Rate:** Not Rated

**Germination Soil Temp.:** 65 F

**USDA Hardiness Zone:** Frost

**Days to Emergence:** 3-5

## AVOIDING NITRATE AND PRUSSIC ACID POISONING

Nitrate Toxicity is common when fertility or manure applications are followed by a period of drought or stress. Cut plants do not lessen in their nitrate levels as they cure. If high levels are suspected, forage should be tested for a period of a few weeks until levels subside. Though often linked to summer annual grasses, increased nitrate levels can show up in most cover crops and forages.

- Nitrates are concentrated more in the lower stalk- raising cutting height can reduce the risk
- When a stressful drought precedes a moisture event, it is recommended to delay harvest by 1-2 weeks
- Consider split applications of nitrogen (especially useful on summer annuals) to decrease nitrate accumulations

Prussic Acid poisoning can occur when feeding forage sorghums after periods of drought or other stress, including frost. Toxic levels dissipate usually after 2-3 weeks and will further decrease when ensiled. Prussic acid is most concentrated in new growth, so sorghum forages should not be grazed until they are at least 18 in. tall. Storing hay or silage for at least 30 days generally dissipates the concern.

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