



**Di Bella Produce**

Ingham North QLD Australia

## **Seed sales- tech sheet.**



### **Lablab**

Lablab (*Lablab purpureus*) is a fast growing, annual, summer legume used for forage and cover crops.

The crop is well suited as a cover crop as a single species stand or in a mixed fallow cover crop, usually mixed with other species like cowpea, Sunn hemp, and soybean.

Lablab is suitable as an excellent quality crop for fattening both sheep and cattle and are also regarded as good feed for milking cows.

As a forage crop, lablab can be mixed with forage sorghum, forage maize and other grass species to increase overall protein levels.

In a crop rotation program, this legume can be included in crop rotations to build up soil nitrogen as well as to break weed and disease cycles. They are particularly useful for building up fertility in country that has been run down from overcropping. Lablab crops that are well nodulated, can fix between 20 to 140 kg nitrogen/ha into the soil.

It is not recommended to plant lablabs as cover crops in tree cropping situations because the plant can become a significant weed and climb onto trees.

### **Cultivar types**

There are 4 main cultivars that are used in Australia: Rongai, Highworth, Tuckerbox and Endurance.

The preferred cultivars used in sugarcane fallow crops are Rongai and Tuckerbox because they flower later and have less opportunity of becoming weed pests in the subsequent sugarcane cane crop.

The preferred cultivars used in grazing forage situations are Highworth, Tuckerbox and Endurance, because of their persistence, vigour and higher biomass.

### **Sowing**

Lablab can be sown into a well-prepared, fallowed seedbed that has a good depth of subsoil moisture (at least 75 cm) or direct drilled into existing cover. Seed should be sown at a depth of 4 to 6 cm into moist soil with good seed-soil contact.

### **Sowing time**

Lablab can be sown when soil temperatures reach a steady 18°C at sowing depth at 9 am Eastern Standard Summer Time (E.S.S.T.) over three or four consecutive days. In Queensland the best sowing time is from mid-October to early January. The earlier sowings usually produce the most feed.

### **Sowing rate**

Seedling rates for lablab should be between 15 to 20 kg/ha under dryland conditions, to achieve a plant population of 40,000 to 60,000 plants/ha (4 to 6 plants/square metre), and up to 30 kg/ha in irrigated or high rainfall areas (95,000 plants/ha).

Row spacings from 18 to 90 cm are suitable for lablab when direct drilled. Lablab can be broadcast and incorporated into a prepared seed bed to achieve a similar affect.



Above- Lablab cv.Tuckerbox . Note the purple colour on the Lablab cv.Tuckerbox stem.

## **Inoculation**

Seed must be inoculated before sowing with a Group J inoculant.

It is advisable to inoculate only enough seed for each day's planting. Store inoculated seed under cool conditions out of sunlight.

Inoculation will ensure that the legumes nodulate efficiently to produce nitrogen.

## **Fertiliser**

Fertilisation of lablab crops is usually only considered when growing the crop for forage. It is not recommended to apply nitrogen fertiliser because it will reduce nodulation and the fixing of atmospheric nitrogen.

Sugarcane fallow cover crops are usually not fertilised; however, some micro-nutrients listed below should be considered.

Location, soil type and history of fertiliser application will determine fertiliser needs. The main nutrients that should be considered when growing lablabs are phosphorus, potassium, cobalt, molybdenum, and zinc levels should be considered.

Consult your local agronomist for a specific nutrition program for forage crops.

## **Herbicides and weed control**

Weeds can become an issue with lablab when establishing the crop or when plants are small.

Most summer grasses (such as Summer grass, and Liver seed grass) can be controlled with pre-emergent herbicides like Pendimethalin, Trifluralin. S-Metolachlor or Metolachlor can also be used to control some grass and broadleaf species.

Lablab is highly sensitive to the phenoxy herbicides such as 2,4-D, M.C.P.A., 2,4-D-B, Tordon-50-D® and dicamba. Do **not** apply these herbicides to or near these crops, as severe damage will occur.

### **Insect pests**

Lablab crops are vulnerable to serious insect damage from sowing until about four weeks after seedling emergence. Establishing crops are sometimes damaged by cutworm, wireworm, bean fly and cowpea aphid (cowpea and lablab), or by cutworm, wireworm, grass blue butterfly, and armyworm. Control may be warranted if the crop is grown for forage production.

Consult your local agronomist for an integrated pest management options when controlling insect pests.

### **Diseases**

Lablab is relatively free of fungal diseases. *Ascochyta* leaf spot (*Ascochyta phaseolarum*) and sclerotinia stem rot (*Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*) have been recorded in Queensland.

### **Nematodes**

High levels of root knot nematodes can be found under some single species crops; however, levels maybe be significantly lower when companion planted with nematode resistant species like Sunn hemp and Velvet bean.



Above: A mixed species cover crop with lablab, Sunn hemp, sunflower, soybean, and cowpea in the Ingham area, Nth. Queensland.



Above- A mix species cover crop with lablab, Sunn hemp, soybean, cowpea and sunflower in the Ingham area, North Queensland.

## Suitability in a mixed species cover crop

Lablab is ideal in a mixed cover crop because it:

- Easy to establish.
- Can provide good cover to prevent soil erosion.
- Suppresses weeds.
- Captures nitrogen in its nodules
- Forages for residual nutrients in the soil and stores it in plant tissue.
- Can climb over erect species like Sunn hemp and sunflower.
- Has a high biomass.

## Purchasing seed to plant.

Contact:



**Di Bella Produce**  
Ingham North QLD Australia

Us on: 0419 673 000 (mobile) or 47760258 (A/H) or [annadibella@bigpond.com](mailto:annadibella@bigpond.com)