

Cavalcade

(Centrosema pascuorum)

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DESCRIPTION

Cavalcade (*Centrosema pascuorum* cv Cavalcade) is a prostrate annual twining legume, which under favourable conditions, produces roots on trailing stems. The stems extend up to 2 m from the crown of the plant and are not hairy.

Leaves have three leaflets (trifoliate), and are often held erect. Leaflets are linear-lanceolate (long and narrow), commonly 5 cm to 10 cm long and 5 mm to 10 mm wide. Flowers are crimson in colour, 1.5 cm to 2.5 cm in diameter. Mature pods are 3.5 cm to 7.0 cm long including an awn (beak) up to 1 cm long and 3 mm to 4 mm wide. Pods contain up to 15 grey-green seeds. When mature, the pods shatter explosively scattering seeds to 1 m or more. There are about 48 000 seeds/kg.



Cavalcade commences flowering in mid-March in the Top End of the Northern Territory, producing large quantities of seed.

Another cultivar of *C.pascuorum* has been released in Australia called Bunday. Bunday differs from Cavalcade by flowering later (mid-April compared with mid-March), and having hairy stems and smaller seeds (about 58 000/kg compared with about 48 000/kg for Cavalcade).

CLIMATE AND SOILS

Centrosema pascuorum is a native of seasonally-arid regions of tropical South and Central America. Cavalcade is suitable for areas with reliable wet and dry seasons receiving 700 mm to 1500 mm average annual rainfall.

It is adapted to a wide range of soil types. Cavalcade has survived prolonged waterlogging and partial submersion on seasonally-flooded soils. It can also tolerate periods of drought during the wet season.

SOWING

Seed should be sown at 2 kg to 6 kg/ha depending on seedbed preparation and the proposed end use. For best results, seed should be sown into a well-prepared seedbed.

Some producers have sown at 10 kg to 15 kg seed/ha to ensure good plant stands for seed crops and first year hay crops.

Some soil disturbance, such as a rough cultivation, is the minimum requirement to ensure establishment.

Cavalcade seed can be inoculated with Centro inoculant to ensure nodulation when sowing in new areas. This is not necessary if legumes have been grown in the area previously, or if there are native legumes present.

FERTILISER REQUIREMENTS

The type and rate of fertiliser to apply depends on soil type, but generally superphosphate at the rate of 100 kg to 250 kg/ha should be applied at sowing on virgin or previously unfertilised areas.

In subsequent years, more superphosphate fertiliser should be applied at 50 kg to 100 kg/ha/year as maintenance dressing.

Applications of potassium, molybdenum or zinc fertilisers may be necessary on some soils.

If you are unsure of the fertiliser requirements, check with a Department of Resources Advisory Officer before sowing.

YIELD

In pure swards under good growing conditions, Cavalcade provides 4 to 6 tonnes of high quality herbage and, under ideal conditions, up to 8 tonnes.

Seed yields of up to 1000 kg/ha have been recorded.

GRAZING

Since Cavalcade is very palatable and is well accepted and sought after by stock, there is currently some doubt about its ability to persist in continuously-grazed mixed pastures.

It can maintain its high quality during the dry season because it retains most of the dead leaves on the stems. This makes it particularly useful as a stand-over feed.

Cavalcade should not be grazed in the year of establishment before it has set seed.

MIXTURES

Grasses with which Cavalcade could be sown are Basilisk signal grass, Gayndah buffel, pangola, Guinea grass, Kazungula setaria, Nixon sabi grass, Jarra, Strickland and Arnhem finger grass.

HAY

Good quality hay can be made from Cavalcade. It is well accepted and sought after by stock.

PESTS AND DISEASES

After periods of wet weather, small patches of dead leaves (leaf blight) can be found in swards. These are caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia* sp. The areas involved are generally only small and no control measures are required. In recent years however, larger patches of *Rhizoctonia* have been found in commercially-grown hay after a number of consecutive crops in the same area. The only current control measure is to grow a grass pasture or another crop in rotation with Cavalcade.

A *Pagria* flea beetle (*Pagria signata*) has been recorded on Cavalcade. The small beetles can reach plague proportions and severely defoliate swards. Control may be necessary in crops grown for seed.

Pod-sucking bugs, pod-borers and other insects can cause an almost total loss of a seed crop. They should be monitored from the commencement of flowering and should be controlled if necessary.

Recently, a case was reported of the two-spotted mite (*Tetranychus urticae*) attacking a Cavalcade seed crop. This pest has not been recorded previously and may infrequently cause problems.

WARNING

Pasture plants have the potential to become weeds in certain situations. To prevent that, ensure that pasture seeds and/or vegetative materials are not inadvertently transferred to adjacent properties or road sides.

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ISSN 0157-8243

Serial No. 415

Agdex No. 137/42

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