FORAGE & GRAIN CROPS

# Buff Cowpea

## Drought and heat tolerant summer forage legume

*Vigna unguiculata*

**Buff Cowpea is an annual herbaceous summer legume forage crop exhibiting a spreading growth habit. Cowpeas are a type of summer forage legume that are tolerant of drought and heat. They can be used to fatten cattle and sheep, or as a green manure crop to improve soil nitrogen levels and can produce quality hay or silage especially in a mix with forage sorghums or millet. Cowpeas can grow in a variety of soils, but they don't like to be waterlogged.**



### QUICK FACTS

TYPE & PERSISTENCY
Annual

MIN RAINFALL
500 mm+

SOWING RATE
15–20 kg/ha General

TOLERANCES
Drought

END USE
Grazing, Hay, Silage, Green manure, Grain

LIVESTOCK
Beef, Sheep

## ABOUT THIS VARIETY

Buff is an erect annual with an herbaceous growth habit and trifoliate leaves producing up to eight branches. It can be used as a dual-purpose crop either for grain and/or forage. Flowering occurs 49–55 days after sowing; flowers have pale violet standard petals on long peduncles. Pods are straw-coloured and contain about 11 buff-coloured, rhomboid seeds.

It produces high seed yields where both seed and plant offer high nutritive value and palatability. It is easy to establish and is known to improve soil fertility through nitrogen fixation. It is widely adaptable to a range of soil types and has greater drought tolerance than other pulses. Used as a grain for human consumption or as forage for livestock.

Cowpeas were released to Australia as a grazing type of cowpea suited to subtropical coastal areas with medium rainfall or in areas with irrigation.

## KEY ATTRIBUTES

- ✓ Excellent source of nitrogen in summer rotations
- ✓ Adds quality to silage and hay through higher protein content
- ✓ Dual-purpose crop for grain and/or forage
- ✓ Good companion legume with millet and forage sorghum
- ✓ Excellent green manure crop
- ✓ Easy establishment

## PLANTING & GRAZING NOTES

Best sown when soil temperatures reach 16˚C, requiring warm temperatures 25-35˚C to grow and good soil moisture. Sow at a depth of 3 – 5 cm. Use 18 – 35cm row spacings to achieve 9 – 13 plants per $m^2$. Wider row spacings allow for better livestock access and reduce trampling. Before sowing, the seeds should be inoculated with Group I to ensure nodulation and nitrogen fixation. Light grazing is recommended to ensure plant regrowth, and it responds well to applications of phosphorus, potassium, and sulphur. Susceptible to frost.

## DISEASE & PEST RESISTANCE

Cowpeas are susceptible to pests and diseases including Phaseolus and root rot fungus.

## STAND LIFE

Annual summer forage crop; flowering occurs 49–55 days after sowing.

## HOW IT'S SOLD

| FORM | PACK |
|---|---|
| Bare | 25 kg |