

## Green Manures No. TGM15

Stylo, *Stylosanthes guianensis*

Green manures are plants which are grown mainly for the benefit of the soil. They can be grown as part of a rotation or in an intercropping system to build soil fertility, or as a cover crop to protect bare soil from erosion. **Full details on the benefits and practice of using green manures can be found in HDRA's booklet 'Green manures/Cover crops'.**

*Stylosanthes guianensis* is also known as Brazilian stylo/lucerne or lengua de rana.



### Growing conditions

- Annual rainfall: Stylo requires over 530mm rainfall and does best with 1000mm. It will survive droughts but not waterlogging.
- Altitude: It grows at altitudes of up to 2000m.
- Temperature: It requires temperatures of 18° C to 27° C. It does not survive hard frosts. It will survive fire.
- Soil type: It tolerates a wide range of soils from pH 4.0 to 8.3. It does not do well on heavy clays or saline soils.

### Nitrogen fixation

Stylo is a legume. This means that it has nodules on its roots which contain bacteria. These bacteria take nitrogen from the air. This is known as nitrogen fixation. The plant uses this to grow and when the legume is dug into the soil, the extra nitrogen is made available to the next crop.

### Cultivation

Broadcast stylo seeds at a rate of 3kg per hectare, no greater than 1.5cm deep. Rake gently by dragging a rake or bush over the area. Alternatively sow the seeds in rows 45 to 60cm apart.

The seeds need to be pre-treated by soaking in hot water for 5 minutes.

### Growth form

Stylo is a perennial plant that can be grown as an annual.

## **Recommended application**

Grow stylo to suppress weeds, add fertility and control erosion.

Dig in as a green manure any time up to flowering.

## **Human food**

Stylo is not suitable for human consumption. Animals may graze after the crop is well established.

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