

MULTI-SPECIES PASTURE

Unlike single-species or monoculture stands of pasture, such as jarrah grass, multi-species pastures comprise several species of plants usually selected for numerous characteristics that complement each other and fulfil niches within a pasture system (growing period, root depth, plant height, nitrogen fixation, palatability or protein content).

Growing multi-species pasture over single-species pasture stands can have some worthwhile benefits to production such as:

- Increased soil fertility and soil ecosystem services
- Enhanced risk management for average wet seasons
- Building of biomass
- Increased soil structure
- Reduced erosion
- Increased beneficial insects
- Increased feed quality
- Increased tonnage of feed
- Improved livestock performance

Multi-species pasture do have some disadvantages so it is important to understand these before switching.

- Strict grazing management and monitoring of selective grazing are necessary, so specific species of your pasture are not overgrazed.
- Switching practices will usually have a learning curve and multi-species pasture is no exception.
- Planning consideration; paddock preparation is the key to successful multi-species pasture
- Seed is usually more expensive per hectare to plant
- Limited herbicide options for in-crop weeds
- Difficulty in finding a blend that works well with the goals of your enterprise

Growing multi-species pasture can be difficult however the practice can assist you to protect your soil, test your management abilities and boost your production. If you want to adopt a multi-species pasture, the best approach is to do your research and talk with trusted Agronomists and other land managers. Starting small, with a nice clean paddock, may be a good starting point.

Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) is working with farmers and land managers to strengthen soil knowledge and improve soil management across the Northern Territory.



Example of legumes and grasses growing together

Massive increase Biomass between Multi species Pasture (Left Side) and single stand Jarrah (Right Side)

HEALTHY SOILS HUB

This project contributes to the NT NRM Plan



For more information:

☎ 08 8942 8300

@ info@territorynrm.org.au

🌐 www.territorynrm.org.au