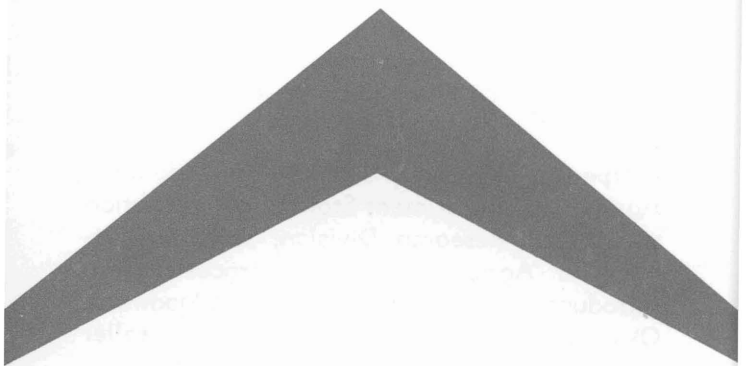


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# Weeping Lovegrass



TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
J. E. Hutchison, Director, College Station, Texas

# Weeping Lovegrass

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**DESCRIPTION** Weeping lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) is a warm-season perennial bunch grass that grows to a height of 2 to 5 feet and forms stools 12 to 15 inches in diameter. Leaf sheaths are crowded at the base of the plant and give rise to numerous slender, light-green leaves up to 24 inches in length. The leaf blades are filiform, glabrous and taper to fine, hair-like leaves at maturity. The seedhead is an open panicle, 6 to 12 inches long, and seed are very small—1½ million or more per pound.

**VARIETIES** **Common** is the earliest lovegrass grown in Texas, being introduced into the United States from Africa in 1927.

**Ermelo** is a strain of weeping lovegrass which is reported to be leafier and more palatable than earlier lovegrass varieties. Ermelo was selected from introductions in 1954 and has been used in numerous pasture projects of the Texas Research Foundation at Renner, Texas.

**Morpa** was released in 1970 by the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station in cooperation with Crops Research Division, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Morpa traces to an introduced accession first grown at Woodward, Oklahoma, in 1955. Morpa is slightly taller

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and later maturing than other weeping lovegrasses. Its leaves are slightly wider and seed characteristics are similar to Common. The name "Morpa" is derived from the words "more" and "palatable" because it is reported to be more palatable than Common and is capable of producing slightly higher gains.

**Renner** is a new variety developed by the Texas Research Foundation at Renner, Texas. The leaves are wider than other varieties, and seed are considerably smaller. It is reported to be more palatable and higher yielding than Ermelo. The plants have a bluish-green color.

**ADAPTATION** Weeping lovegrass was first used on deep, infertile sands where more productive grasses are difficult to establish and maintain. It has an extensive root system and is used for soil erosion control. One of the major lovegrass areas in Texas is in the eastern Panhandle and southward to the Rolling Plains. Lovegrass is grown extensively in southwestern Oklahoma. Although it is best adapted to sandy soils, it will grow on most well-drained soils where the annual rainfall is above 16 inches.

**ESTABLISHMENT** **Seedbeds** for weeping lovegrass should be clean and firm. Areas subject to blowing may be planted to warm-season annuals, such as sorghum-sudan hybrids the preceding season to provide stubble cover or slight mulch.

**Planting date** is determined by the planting method. Plant 0.7 pounds of pure live seed per acre in 36- to 42-inch rows. Broadcast or

drill 1.5 pounds of pure live seed per acre. Any planter or drill which will handle small seed may be used. Cover the seed not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and firm the soil.

**Weed control** by means of cultivation, mowing, 2,4-D, dicamba or a combination of these, may be necessary. Avoid using pre-emergent herbicides such as simazine. Do not use any herbicide on newly seeded grass until it has made at least 6 weeks' growth.

**MANAGEMENT** **Fertilization** is necessary for maximum growth and quality, although weeping lovegrass will establish to a stand without fertilization. Fertilizer improves forage growth and quality and stimulates seed production. A soil test is the best way to determine fertilizer needs. In the drouthy areas, applications of 40 to 60 pounds of nitrogen plus other nutrients would be needed for spring growth. In the higher rainfall areas, application of 60 to 80 pounds of nitrogen would be desirable in addition to other nutrients. Similar to other forage crops, quality declines after 4 to 5 weeks of forage growth. Thus, lovegrass should be used when forage is young and of improved quality.

Grazing the young, tender, leafy growth provides greatest animal performance.

Weeping lovegrass produces satisfactory animal performance in early spring and late fall. It produces favorable tonnages during these seasons and should be stocked at a high rate to utilize the forage. Because lovegrass usually grows earlier than many other warm-season perennials, it can be used on a limited acreage to provide early spring grazing.

Table 1 shows the animal performance on Common weeping lovegrass in comparison with Coastal bermudagrass at Texas A&M University Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Overton in East Texas.

Grazing on lovegrass pastures should be controlled to permit close grazing. Cross-fencing, rotation grazing and other techniques of grazing management should be used.

Table 2 shows that forage quality at comparable stages of growth (as indicated by a higher cell wall content) and intake of the forages are lower for Common weeping lovegrass than for Coastal. This also is indicated by the better animal gains on Coastal in Table 1.

Hay from weeping lovegrass should be cut before seedheads are formed. Standing hay of lovegrass is less desirable than the young, tender forage. Where standing hay is desired, lovegrass should be fertilized heavily in late summer and early fall to encourage improved growth and quality. Permitting lovegrass to mature without fertilization in the fall results in extremely low-quality forage.

Table 1. Animal\* performance on warm-season grasses, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Progress Report 2765

Pasture	Average stocking rate (Animals/acre)	Animal days per A	Liveweight gain/acre (Pounds)	Average daily gain (Pounds)
Coastal bermuda-grass	2.0	322	550	1.7
	1.2	235	401	1.7
Common weeping lovegrass	2.0	252	356	1.4
	1.2	252	308	1.2

\* Bred heifers

Table 2. Cell wall content and intake of Coastal bermudagrass and Common weeping lovegrass, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Progress Report 2765

Pasture	Cell wall content (Percent)	Intake (Pounds dry matter/day)
Coastal bermudagrass	65	22
Common weeping lovegrass	78	14



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