

Agricultural & Natural Resources Update



ALACHUA COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 2800 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32609 (352)955-2402

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HAIRY INDIGO (*Indigofera hitsutra*)

indigo can be productive, native to Africa, Southern Asia and Australia. It has become naturalized in Florida and other southern states. It is an erect-growing, reseeding, summer annual legume that may grow 4 to 7 feet tall if not grazed. The plant is somewhat shrubby, and stems become very woody as the plant matures. Stems and leaves are covered with short, bristlelike hairs. It is moderately resistant to root-knot nematode. Unlike most other legumes, hairy indigo is well adapted to deep sands with good drainage. It does not grow well on soils that flood for an extended period of time. Early-and-late-flowering types have been developed, but all are now marketed as common hairy indigo.

Hairy indigo is mainly used for grazing, and growth is sometimes accumulated to furnish high-quality grazing in the fall for weaned calves or dry cows. Hairy indigo leaves are also nutritious for goats.

Hairy Indigo (*Indigofera hitsutra*) is considered to be one of the most aggravating weeds to control for peanut production. However, in the right production system, hairy warm season forage. Hairy indigo is Asia and Australia. It has become naturalized in Florida and other southern states. It is an erect-growing, reseeding, summer annual legume that may grow 4 to 7 feet tall if not grazed. The plant is somewhat shrubby, and stems become very woody as the plant matures. Stems and leaves are covered with short, bristlelike hairs. It is moderately resistant to root-knot nematode. Unlike most other legumes, hairy indigo is well adapted to deep sands with good drainage. It does not grow well on



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Hairy Indigo (*Indigofera hitsutra*) - continued:

Studies at the University of Florida showed that hairy indigo can produce up to 12 tons of dry matter per acre that would contain about 20% crude protein and 50-60% digestibility. The leaves also contain high levels of mineral nutrients.

Cattle may reject hairy indigo when they are first placed in a pasture, but after one or more days they begin grazing. After adapting to hairy indigo, cows and calves readily consume it. Hairy indigo is sometimes mistakenly labeled as a toxic plant. Cattle may develop sores on their feet and legs when grazing hairy indigo in the rainy season due to irritation of the wet skin of the cattle by the bristle like hairs on the stems of the plants. However, this is solely due to mechanical irritation on the skin, not due to any toxin within the plant.

Establishment and management procedures are similar to those for other warm-season annual legumes. Hairy indigo is easy to establish and requires very little management afterwards. Hairy indigo requires soil pH of up to 6; the plant will not grow well or persist on acid soils. Liming may be required to achieve the optimum pH. Depending on soil test results, it may be better to apply dolomite (which also supplies magnesium) than lime. How much lime will be needed depends on the soil type and original or native pH of the soil. Contact your County Extension Agent for help on how you can test your soil and determine your liming needs. For good establishment, 15 lb. of seed per acre is recommended. Disking, rolling or packing the soil after broadcasting the seed, will give better establishment. Establishment and production can be enhanced with application of 30 and 60 lb/acre of P₂O₅ and K₂O, respectively. Inorganic nitrogen fertilizer is not required since hairy indigo is a legume and will produce its own nitrogen from the air.

Due to its hardseededness, some seed may lie dormant in the soil for many years after being planted and then germinate when the soil is disturbed. To ensure that the plant re-establishes each year from seed, it is advisable to withdraw

intensity two weeks before the plants begin to flower or in late summer or early fall. This practice would allow some of the plants go to seed. Grazing animals will help distribute the seeds in the pastures. The self-seeding nature of the plants is good from the forage standpoint, but it is a negative characteristic in terms of the weed potential of the plant. Consequently, vegetable and other row crop farmers often consider hairy indigo a weed. However, used as a cover crop or green manure crop, hairy indigo can effectively suppress nematodes that might otherwise seriously damage succeeding crops. Besides grazing, hairy indigo has also been used for hay and silage. Recommended herbicides to control hairy indigo in soybeans and peanuts include: Valor (flumioxazin) which is labeled for preemergence applications only as well as postemergence applications of Ultra Blazer (acifluorfen), Cobra (lactofen), and Classic (chlorimuron ethyl). Strongarm (diclosulam) also offers good preemergence control however, it is only labeled for peanuts.

Information for this report was compiled from:

Minor Use Summer Annual Forage Legumes by
C. G. Chambliss & I. V. Ezenwa

Weed Management in Peanuts – 2009 by
J.A. Ferrell, G. E. MacDonald & B. J. Brecke

Weed Management in Soybeans – 2008 by
J.A. Ferrell, G. E. MacDonald, & B. J. Brecke

PESTICIDE UPDATES



- ▶ The EPA has approved tolerances for the insecticide Coragen (chlorantraniliprole). Tolerances of importance to Florida include grass forage/hay/fodder, okra, green onion, peanut hay, strawberry, sugarcane, and leaves of root and tuber vegetables (Group 2). (*Federal Register*, 6/26/09).

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PESTICIDE UPDATES



- ▶ On June 3, the EPA released the final and revised re-registration eligibility decisions for methyl bromide, chloropicrin, and metam (sodium and potassium). Based on stakeholder input, many of the onerous aspects of the decisions have been modified. It appears that buffer zones can be managed within current use patterns, especially if buffer zone reducing credits are employed. This includes up to a 60 percent reduction in buffer zone if virtually impermeable film (VIF) mulch is used. EPA has also determined that buffer zones may overlap as long as twelve hours has elapsed since the end of one day's application until the start of the next application. However, other components of the decisions will greatly impact stakeholders, such as preparation of fumigation management plans, posting and notification, emergency response, and safety training/medical requirements. (*UF/IFAS Fruit & Berry Times, June 2009*).

AGRICULTURAL NEWS

Southern Ag Leaders Oppose Climate Change Legislation

"The existing language was created with no consultation from any segment of agriculture and we see negative effects on our producers in terms of new regulations and costs with no financial benefits."

Commissioners and secretaries of agriculture representing 17 southern states and U.S. territories have said the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA) formally opposes H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.

"We cannot support this bill or any other environmental legislation without significant input from agriculture," said Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture and current SASDA President, Terry Peach. "The existing language was created with no consultation from any segment of agriculture and we see negative effects on our producers in terms of new regulations and costs with no financial benefits."

Agriculture and forestry play key roles in reducing carbon in the environment and therefore must be brought in to any discussions regarding climate change legislation, said Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture, Ron Sparks.

"We as members of the agricultural community cannot be excluded from any discussion on any proposed environmental regulation that touches our industry," he said. "That is why SASDA has to take this step in opposing H.R. 2453 and making a resolution to the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture to also oppose this legislation."

Agriculture's role in the economy, sustaining the environment and the food security of the nation is changing and the public is going to have to embrace that change.

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Charles Bronson, said agriculture is evolving. "For the past 40 years agriculture has meant food and fiber," he said. "The future of agriculture is going to be food, fiber and fuel. Any efforts to create legislation that might impact this industry must include all sectors of agriculture's input."

SASDA member states include: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands, and West Virginia.

The annual SASDA summer meeting and convention was held in Oklahoma City. (*Southeast Farm Press June 2009*)

To simplify information available in the newsletter, it is sometimes necessary to use trade names of products, equipment and firms. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products, equipment and firms not mentioned.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance Workshop

Monday, September 14, 2009

9:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

**Alachua County Extension Service
2800 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville**

Registration fee is \$50.00
full day (certification)

\$20.00 - half day (re-certification)

Pre-registration is required.

Registration deadline is September 10, 2009

For more information call (352)955-2402

6 CEUs will be available!

- 2 CORE
- 4 Ornamental & Turf Pest Control
- 4 Private Applicator Agriculture Pest Control
- 4 Commercial Lawn & Ornamental
- 4 Limited Certification Commercial
Landscape Maintenance
- 4 Limited Certification Lawn & Ornamental