



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

FODDER RADISH (JAPANESE RADISH)

Fodder Radish (Japanese Radish)

The Range and Forage Institute (ARC-RFI) at Cedara has evaluated various fodder radish (also referred to as Japanese radish) cultivars over the past few years. Nooitgedacht, by far the most widely utilized fodder radish cultivar in South Africa, has large roots but very hairy, prickly leaves. In recent years the ARC-RFI has developed new dual-purpose fodder radish cultivars with soft leaves. By dual purpose we mean that the young leaves can be picked for "mfino" and the roots and remaining leaves fed to the cattle. This has applicability mainly to the small-scale farmer.

However, in breeding these new soft-leaved fodder radish cultivars the ARC-RFI has succeeded in producing a plant which has more leaf bulk than Nooitgedacht. These also have applicability to the commercial farmer, as the forage quality of the leaves is higher than that of the roots. In addition the leaves account for more herbage bulk than the roots prior to leaf senescence (die back) late in the season. The softness of the leaves also makes them more palatable to the animals.

Late summer (February) plantings are generally recommended for all fodder radishes. It is important to space the plants sufficiently at the recommended spacing of 0.75 m to 1 m between rows and 0.5 m between plants within the row. Strategic irrigation will ensure a good stand.

In certain areas, particularly following a period of dry weather in the weeks after establishment, fodder radish can become heavily infested with aphids. In order to minimise aphid infestations, some farmers prefer to establish their fodder radish in early March rather than February. However, as a general rule the later planted fodder radish crops produce smaller roots and lower yielding crops. High populations of fodder radish associated with closer spacing result in smaller plants and these also tend to be even more prone to damage by aphids.

Further Information:

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