Range grasses factsheet

Eragrostis superba (Maasai love grass)

			
E. superba crop at KALRO Kiboko seed multiplication plots	Stripping method of harvesting	Seeds well spread under the shed before cleaning	Packaged *E. superba seeds*
Common names	**Scientific name**	**Synonyms**	**Family/tribe**
Maasai lovegrass, Wilmann lovegrass	*Eragrostis superba*		*Poaceae*
Description	It is a perennial species, densely tufted which is quick growing up to 1m tall. Has large, flat, attractive spikelets, up to 16 mm long, green, often flushed purple when young. It occurs in areas below 2100 m above sea level.		
Distribution	Arid and semi-arid counties in Kenya		
Ecology	Requires a rainfall range of 500-875 mm and prefers sandy soils but occurs also on clay loams and clays. Tolerant to salinity, alkalinity and droughts Less tolerant to, waterlogging and slightly to the shade		
Agronomy	**Establishment**: - Land preparation should be completed just before the rains begin in the ASALs from beginning to mid-October in the Southern Rangelands and late February to mid-March in the Northern counties. Preparation methods include – use of ox-plough, range pits, no-till and mechanized land preparation Planting is carried out through broadcasting and drilling in furrows at 5kg/ha and adjusted according to seed germination capacity. Spreads well by seed and easily covers the ground through rhizomes It can be planted in mixtures with other range grasses such as *Enteropogon macrostachyus, Chloris roxburghiana* and *Cenchrus ciliaris* **Weed control:** Very important during the first year. Done by hand by either uprooting or using a hoe or use of selective herbicides **Harvesting and storage:** easy to harvest seeds. Up to 1ton/ha of seeds can be harvested. The seeds are harvested when they show signs of browning (straw-like colour) before the start of seed fall by striping the		

	ripe panicles. Carried out during dry conditions. The seeds are stored in air dry conditions away from moisture and rodents.
Production potential/ Feeding value	Nutritive value: Crude protein content (CP) of 7-12 percent of dry matter and crude fibre of 30-35%. Fairly palatable and readily grazed but it gets stemmy and unpalatable near maturity. Dry matter Yield: Yields up to 13.5tons/ha/yr equivalent to 898 bales of hay each at 15kg
Varieties	None
Source of Seed	KALRO Kiboko and partners such as farmer groups
Reference Links – book, journal paper, magazine, brochure, bulletin, fact sheet, web etc.	http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpc/doc/gbase/Safricadata/eragsup.htm