



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Plant Materials Program

# 'Tropic Lalo' Paspalum

*Paspalum hieronymi* Hack.

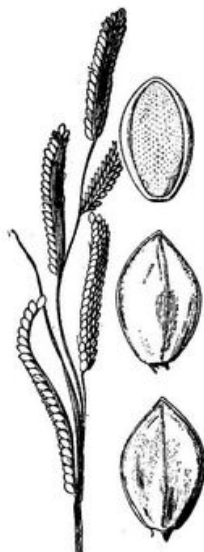
A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Hoolehua Plant Materials Center, Hoolehua, Hawaii



'Tropic Lalo' paspalum (*Paspalum hieronymi* Hack.) is a cultivar released in 1984 in collaboration with the National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

## Description

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum is a low growing; rapidly spreading, stoloniferous grass that usually reaches a height of about 12 inches; however, it will grow twice as tall under moist, fertile conditions. It produces many stolons that will readily root at the nodes to form a dense, sod-like turf. Its leaves are approximately 3-9 inches long and 1/2 inch wide. The leaves and stems are covered with coarse hairs about 1/16-1/8 inch long. The flowering stems are semi-erect and are 12-24 inches long, depending on the soil fertility. Seed viability is poor with only 1-2 percent of the seeds produced being viable.



Hitchcock, A.S. (rev. A. Chase). 1950. *Manual of the grasses of the United States*. USDA Miscellaneous Publication No. 200. Washington, DC. 1950.

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum has been compared to 'Pensacola' bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*), hilograss (*Paspalum conjugatum*), kikuyugrass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), and seashore paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*). 'Tropic Lalo' paspalum grows faster than 'Pensacola' bahiagrass, but does not grow as tall. It provides better cover than both 'Pensacola' bahiagrass and hilograss. And although it is slower growing than kikuyugrass, 'Tropic Lalo' paspalum requires less maintenance. It is also adapted to a wider range of environments than seashore paspalum, which is primarily used around brackish water.

## Source

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum, originally from Brazil, was introduced to Hawaii in 1968 by the USDA-NRCS Hoolehua Plant Materials Center in collaboration with the National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum is a cooperative release by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Department of Agronomy and Soil Sciences, College of Tropical Agriculture at the University of Hawaii. This cultivar is widely adapted to the soils and climates of the Pacific Island Area and is an excellent groundcover for soil erosion control.

## Conservation Uses

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum is primarily recommended as a groundcover to control soil erosion in orchards, waterways, roadsides, and other erosion-prone areas. It is also an acceptable turf or lawn and will tolerate heavy use from wheeled equipment and foot traffic.

## Area of Adaptation and Use

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum, in the Pacific Island Area, is adapted to elevations from sea level to over 3,000 feet and annual rainfall of 40-100 inches. It will grow well in other areas if under irrigation. It is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions—course to fine textured soils, strongly acid to slightly alkaline (pH4.5-7.5) soils, and low fertility soils. It is somewhat tolerant to low-lying soils that tend to stay wet and do not become waterlogged. But on the other hand, it does not tolerate long, dry periods. It is quite resistant to water erosion. It is tolerant of 50-60 percent shade, but has slower growth and forms a less dense mat.

## Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum is usually established from sprigs or stolons planted in furrows 1-3 feet apart. The minimum planting rate should be no less than 40

bushels/acre of sprigs or stolons. Greater amounts may be required with closer spacing. Sprigs and stolons may also be broadcasted and lightly covered with a disk planted on grids varying from 12x12 inches up to 36x36 inches. In plantings of 12x12 inches, complete cover may be achieved in as little as six weeks. Sprigs, stolons, and newly established plants are susceptible to drought and require that the area to be planted be moist and/or irrigated. Land preparation beforehand may be reduced with herbicide applications and/or disking to remove existing vegetation, however, a well prepared seedbed is preferred. Until the grass is established, weeds may become a problem unless planting into a seedbed where the potential for weed emergence has been reduced. This may be done by forcing weed-growth and spraying weeds back with herbicides for several rounds before planting. Also, frequent mowing may control weeds in established plantings.



'Tropic Lalo' paspalum lawn maintained at Hoolehua PMC.

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum, being low growing, will not need frequent mowing unless it is used in situations that require a close-cut turf, such as a lawn or a groundcover in a macadamia nut orchard (to facilitate nut harvest). Evaluation trials in diverse environments have indicated that, depending on the location and type of use, it may be necessary to mow 'Tropic Lalo' paspalum 6 to 30 times a year to maintain a close-cut turf. 'Tropic Lalo' paspalum will tolerate and recover well from being cut to less than 1 inch. 'Tropic Lalo' paspalum, during establishment, will respond to nitrogen fertilizer, but once established it requires only low maintenance, and fertilizer applications may not be necessary. In orchards, it should obtain sufficient nutrients from the fertilizer used for the trees. It may be grown in association with nitrogen-contributing legumes such as white clover (*Trifolium repens*), big trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*), *Desmodium* species, etc.

### Ecological Considerations

'Tropic Lalo' paspalum can be damaged by the grass webworm, *Herpetogramma licarsisalis* (Walker); however, there have been no reports of significant damage due to plant pathogens.

### Availability

*For seed or plant increase:* Foundation seed is maintained by the Hoolehua Plant Materials Center. Contact the Hoolehua PMC for current commercial sources with available planting material.

*For more information, contact:*  
Hoolehua Plant Materials Center  
4101 Maunaloa Highway, P.O. Box 236  
ph.(808) 567-6885, fax(808)567-6537  
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/hipmc/index.html>

### Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>

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