

# ONA REPORTS

*published in*

***THE FLORIDA CATTLEMAN AND LIVESTOCK JOURNAL***

**July-1993**

## **Characteristics of Limpoglass Cultivars**

W.D. Pitman  
*University of Florida, IFAS*

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



[William F. Brown](#)

Over the past few years Floralta limpoglass (*Hemarthria altissima*) has been established on considerable acreage in peninsular Florida. Only limited areas of other limpoglass cultivars have been planted in recent years. Floralta is very similar in appearance to the original big-stemmed limpoglass Cultivar, Bigalta, which was extensively planted in peninsular Florida several years ago. Characteristics of these two limpoglass cultivars (Bigalta and Floralta), other than general appearance, are distinctly different. The major limitation of Bigalta, which has restricted its use, is poor survival under grazing. Floralta is quite persistent under moderate grazing pressure.

Successful use of Bigalta for grazing is likely only on the more moist flatwoods sites. Typically, extended periods of deferment from grazing during the growing season are required for long-term survival of Bigalta stands. Establishment is critical, with sparse weedy stands often not developing into adequate stands.

Floralta is adapted to a wider range of flatwoods soils and grazing conditions. Long-term stand survival can be expected with appropriate management. Even stands which are sparse initially can be expected to improve over time on appropriate sites.

Where weeds or other plants provide competition during establishment, control of this competition is critical for Bigalta. With Floralta, competing plants which are not readily grazed can limit pasture establishment. However, plants which are palatable to grazing livestock can be effectively controlled in establishing Floralta by grazing after the Floralta planting material has had sufficient opportunity to develop a root system.

Lack of persistence of Bigalta is associated with a high palatability of succulent Bigalta growth. Floralta is not as palatable as Bigalta and, due to low nitrogen (protein) concentration of Floralta forage, protein supplementation is often required for high intake rates, even during the growing season. This can be especially important for adequate growth rates of replacement heifers.

While each of these cultivars can be effectively used on the appropriate sites, the specific management requirements of each must be met for satisfactory results. Bigalta must be on moist sites with extended periods of deferment from grazing for stand persistence. Floralta can be more extensively planted and is competitive with other pasture plants, but desired performance of cattle may require protein supplementation even during the growing season.