Stylosanthes (stylo) is the most important, economically significant and proven tropical pasture legume genus in Australia and throughout the tropics. Since 1975, about 1 million ha of grazing land has been successfully improved with stylo cultivars in Australia. Annual animal production from native pastures improved with stylo can be increased up to 50 to 80 kg beast\(^1\) compared with unimproved pastures (Gillard and Winter, 1984). It is being increasingly adopted in northern Australia and is seen to have expanding opportunities overseas. In the state of Queensland alone, stylo is suited to an estimated 18 million ha (Weston et al., 1981). In the early 1970s, it was estimated that approximately 2 million ha had been colonized by sown and naturalized Townsville stylo [TS, *Stylosanthes humilis* (H.B.K.)]. Stylo anthracnose caused by *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* (Penz.) Penz. & Sacc. was first observed in Australia on *S. fruticosa* (Retz) Alston in 1973 at Kalinga on Cape York Peninsula (O’Brien and Pont, 1977). Anthracnose affects all stylo species but there is wide variation in resistance to the disease. Much of the area containing TS was destroyed by anthracnose in the 1970s and TS is now of little significance in stylo-based pastures.

The demise of TS was a devastating event in the historical development of stylo pastures in Australia. Selective breeding programs to replace TS followed, using *S. hamata* (L.) Taub. and *S. scabra* (Vog.). To date, 13 cultivars of stylo have been released in Australia (Table 1); none however display complete resistance to anthracnose and resistance breakdown through pathogenic specialization is a constant threat. Anthracnose greatly weakens and can kill susceptible plants but the greatest impact is on the seed industry. Due to anthracnose susceptibility, commercial seed production has ceased in nine cultivars of stylo (Chakraborty et al., 1991). Cultivars Lawson, Gordon and Paterson of *S. humilis*, released prior to the advent of anthracnose, are all susceptible to the disease. With the exception of 'Oxley', all cultivars of *S. guianensis* (Aubl.) Sw. are also susceptible and have mostly disappeared from the main stylo-growing areas. *S. scabra* cv. Fitzroy was productive over a large area of central Queensland but was discarded from commercial use due to severe damage from anthracnose within five years of its release (Davis et al., 1984). It was recommended for use only in low rainfall areas as it is too susceptible to anthracnose in moist environments but severe disease has occurred even in drier areas (Ralph, 1987). Losses of up to 80% in dry matter yields of Fitzroy have been recorded (Davis et al., 1987). When *S. scabra* cv. Seca was released it was highly susceptible...