

ALFALFA

Medicago sativa



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Introduced from southwest Asia. And widely utilized in all 50 states. Grows in both cool and warm season. Herbaceous, perennial legume. Numerous erect stems 2 to 3' tall from woody root crowns. Small purple, white and sometimes yellow pea-like flowers. Stout, deep, taprooted with nitrogen-fixing nodules when inoculated. Taproot may be 10 to 30' long. Nitrogen fixing legume.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Resumes growth in early spring. Flowers in early to late summer and make excellent

regrowth after flowering or cutting. Thrives on deep, fertile, loamy soils having porous subsoil. Tolerant of deep sand and sandy soils with adequate moisture. Well adapted to deep soils with water tables to 5 to 9' of surface. Better adapted to basic soils with liberal calcium content. Acid soils need to be limed. Tolerant of moderately saline soils. Moderately good drought tolerance. Fair shade tolerance. Grown from below sea level in Imperial Valley, California, to 8000' elevation in Colorado. Good fire resistance when dormant.

CULTURE

Drill or broadcast seed 1/4 – 1/2" deep on loamy to sandy soils with firm, moist seedbeds, slightly deeper on drier, sandy or loose seedbeds. Seed often blown on in some areas. Seed 6 to 10 lbs. PLS per acre. Use 8 to 16 lbs. PLS per acre for broadcast seeding in harsh, erosive conditions or more humid zones. Reduce seeding rate in grass mixtures to prevent bloat in pastures. Seed in spring or late summer to fall under irrigation. Needs 30 days after germination before the first frost. New seedlings require weed control and protection from grazing.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Produces excellent hay and pasture alone or in mixtures. Used on mined lands and wildlife cover. Can induce bloat in ruminants but correctable by management and supplements. Harvest at approximately 1/10 bloom for optimal quality/quantity. Graze conservatively in a rotation plan. Leave 10" growth preceding first killing frost. May need insect control at times.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

Numerous varieties and cultivars. Consult local agricultural specialist in your area.

PawneeButtesSeedInc.

PawneeButtesSeed.com 1-800-782-5947