

# RED CLOVER

*Trifolium pratense*



## ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Introduced from Europe but widely used and distributed in U.S. A biennial or short-lived perennial, herbaceous legume. Usually taller than wild white clovers. Tufted without stolons, but with larger, oblong, hairy leaflets, white-blotched in center, and having larger rose-purple flower heads. Usually prostrate growth but can be erect. Nitrogen fixing legume.

## GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Thrives in cool and humid or irrigated areas and

is less drought-tolerant than alfalfa. Grows on fertile, well-drained soils with high moisture holding capacity. Better adapted on medium to fine-textured soils. Tolerant of moderately acid to neutral soils. Better performance with pH 6.0 or less. Not tolerant of salinity. Usually requires good soil phosphate content for best production.

## CULTURE

Drill or broadcast seed, cover 1/4 - 1/2" deep in a firm well-prepared seedbed. If mixed with grass, drill in alternate rows if feasible. Drill seed 3 to 6 lbs. PLS per acre. Seed in grass mixture in humid areas or under irrigation. Use about 1.5 lbs. PLS per acre in grass mixtures on dryland western sites. Can be seeded in spring in northern areas or early fall in southern areas. Late summer seedings are satisfactory with adequate moisture or irrigation. Inoculate seed before planting. Protect from overgrazing and weeds in seeding year. Strong seedling vigor.

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Commonly used in short rotation hay crops, but included in some irrigated or humid pasture mixtures for its quick, short term establishment. Useful in surface mine land reclamation for contributions of Nitrogen fertility and diversity in wildlife plantings. Inadequate winter cover seeded alone and needs to be seeded with long-lived perennial grasses. Good palatability to livestock, especially in summer. Seeds consumed by a variety of birds. May occasionally cause bloat in ruminants and contains estrogen that can cause animal reproductive problems.

## IMPROVED VARIETIES

'Kenland', 'Redland', 'Arlington' and 'Mammoth'

Several other cultivars and varieties exist. Consult with plant materials specialists for material adapted to your area.

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PawneeButtesSeed.com 1-800-782-5947