

WHITE CLOVER

Trifolium repens



ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Introduced from Eurasia, widely used and distributed in U.S. Perennial, herbaceous legume. Usually prostrate but can be erect. Stems freely branching from base, stoloniferous, rooting at nodes. Nearly round flowering head with many small pea-like flowers. White or pinkish petals producing 4 to 5 seeds per pod. Nitrogen fixing legume.

GROWTH HABITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

Many small prostrate types but also large upright tall and intermediate types. Initially produces a tap roots but later replaced by finer branched roots. Resumes growth in early to mid spring or later in higher elevations and altitudes.

Flowers in May to July or all summer long in cooler, moister areas. Become semi-dormant, under hot, dry conditions with abundant regrowth in summer and less in fall.

CULTURE

Drill or broadcast seed. Cover 1/4 – 1/2" deep in a firm well-prepared seedbed. Plant in alternate rows with grasses if feasible. Drill 2.5 lbs. PLS per acre in grass mixture in humid areas or under irrigation. Use about 1.5 lbs. PLS per acre in grass mixtures on dryland western sites. Plant in spring or late fall in cooler climates. Late summer seeding satisfactory in warm temperate and southern climates with adequate moisture or irrigation. Inoculate seed before planting. Protect from overgrazing and weeds in seeding year. Fertilize to amend tested soil deficiencies, especially phosphates.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Important for pasture and useful for stabilizing disturbed and eroding land surfaces, including roadsides and mine spoils. Included in grass forb mixtures and wildlife plantings. Also used in lawns and turf plantings

Good palatability to livestock, especially in summer. Seeds consumed by a variety of birds. May cause bloat occasionally in ruminants and contains estrogen that may cause animal reproductive problems. Used for inter-seeding and over-seeding depleted or renovated bluegrass or other mostly cool season pasture. Should graze or defoliate grasses moderately close during rapid grass growth stages to allow clover to compete.

IMPROVED VARIETIES

Several cultivars of the large 'Ladino' and a variety of sources of small and intermediate varieties exist. Consult with plant materials specialists for material adapted to your area.

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