

DESCRIPTION

Red clover is a herbaceous (non-woody), short-lived perennial plant. Stems develop from the crown and range in height from 18 to 36 inches at maturity. Stems on most varieties grown in the U.S. are densely pubescent (hairy). Leaves are arranged alternately on the stems. The first true leaf is unifoliate with succeeding leaves being trifoliate (three hairy leaflets per petiole). Individual leaflets are usually marked with a whitish V.

Flower heads, located at the tip of stems, usually have 75-125 individual pinkish-violet flowers. Red clover seeds are mittenshaped, 2-3 mm long and vary in color from yellow to brown to purple. Red clover has a taproot system with many secondary branches.

Two types of red clover are grown in North America; mammoth (single cut) and medium (multi-cut). The medium type is most commonly used in the U.S. and it will produce several cuts or graze-downs each year depending on location and growing conditions.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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Red Clover



The adaptable forage legume
with great benefits.

Red Clover is an important forage legume grown in temperate regions throughout the world. It is believed to have originated in southeastern Europe near the Mediterranean Sea, and was grown in Europe in the third and fourth centuries. It was introduced into the USA by European colonists in the late 1600's.



Red clover is widely grown in the temperate regions throughout the U.S. extending from the Northeast through the Midwest to eastern North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas and into the upper South. Red clover is becoming increasingly important in the Deep South where it is used as a winter annual. It is also grown in many areas in the Pacific Northwest.

Red clover is adapted to a wide range of climatic conditions, soil types, fertility levels, use patterns and management. It is easy to establish, has high seedling vigor, is an excellent nitrogen fixer, is free from many disease and insect pests, has versatile uses and is suitable for use in crop rotations. Although red clover is tolerant of a wide range of soil and climatic conditions, it is best suited where summer temperatures are moderately cool to warm and soil moisture is available throughout the growing season.

Red clover is most often grown in association with cool season grasses (orchardgrass, tall fescue, timothy, or smooth brome grass) but can be grown alone or with certain warm season perennial grasses. It can be used for pasture, hay, or haylage, and is an excellent soil improvement crop. When grown where it is well-adapted, the yield of red clover is usually higher than that of any other clover. In addition, it has a longer growing season than any other clover grown in the United States.

