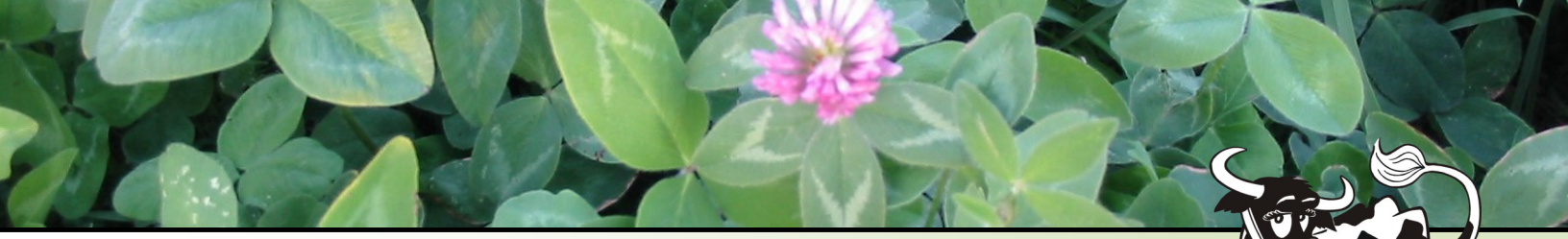


Forage Tech Sheet

Common Medium Red Clover

Red clover is one of the fastest establishing legumes and can even be grown on more acid soils. It has hollow, hairy stems and branches. The main draw back is limited persistence and winter-hardiness, as well as difficulty with drying.

Common Medium Red Clover is faster establishing than alfalfa and better adapted to wetter and lower pH soils. Red clover can sometimes be seen as a good alternative to alfalfa in heavier soils and a forage that does not lose quality as quickly with maturity. It does have less tolerance to drought, and lower persistence, however. Winter hardiness is generally lower as well, and with its hairy stems, it does not dry as well (improved varieties with reduced stem hair are preferred for dry hay).

Red clover's thick taproot can reach a length of 24 to 26 inches, with its many lateral offshoots mainly concentrated in the upper 5 inches of soil.

Establishment is flexible. It can be seeded in early spring or late summer, or frost seeded into a thinning stand in late winter when the ground is frozen and bare soil is exposed.

With a spring seeding, red clover can be cut 3 times during the establishment year if there are favorable conditions (including fertility, moisture, etc.). Although a more aggressive cutting schedule than typically recommended, Penn State has observed greater forage and nutritional yield, with no negative effects in the year following establishment.

Like many clovers and alfalfa, red clover pairs well with cool season grasses, and seedlings are competitive with grasses when planted together. Mixing these species improves yield and helps protect against diseases like Black Patch, as well as erosion risks. If the clover and other legumes are less than 30 percent of the stand, nitrogen fertilization will be needed.

At A Glance

Key Features

- Short-lived, productive legume
- Large leaves and rapid establishment
- Drought and heat tolerant
- Fixes nitrogen, reducing fertilization costs
- Medium and fine-textured soils are preferable over sandy or gravelly soils
- Many establishment windows including frost-seeding, spring seeding, and interseeding in corn at last cultivation

Best Uses

Cover crop, rotational grazing, wet hay

Establishment

Seeding rate:

Pure stand: 15 - 20 lbs / acre

Companion with grass:
8 - 10 lbs / acre

Over-seeding into grass: 10 - 12 lbs / acre

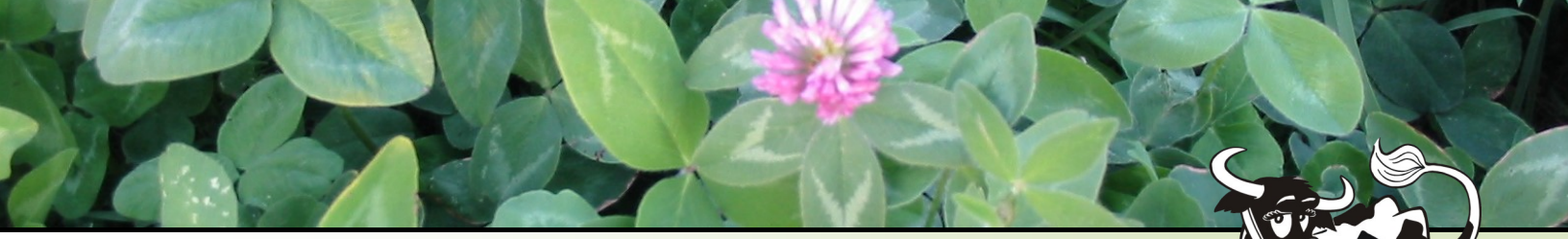
Depth: 1/4" - 1/2"

Perennial Legume

King's AgriSeeds Inc.

1828 Freedom Rd.
Suite 101
Lancaster, PA 17601
(717) 687-6224

High Energy Forages and Soil Building Cover Crops



Forage Tech Sheet

Cutting: First harvest is suggested at 60-70 days after establishment (about 10 percent bloom), with subsequent cuttings at 30-35 day intervals. Harvest at pre-bloom or early bloom stage.

Red clover needs 45 days after the last fall cutting to recover and store carbohydrates before the first hard frost. Harvesting too late in the fall, not allowing adequate recovery, or harvesting in very hot and dry conditions can reduce stand longevity.

Fertility: Common medium red clover needs phosphorous and potash. Soil pH should be at least 6.0. If lower, the plant cannot fix its own nitrogen, and N fertilizer will need to be added.

Possible Applications for Common Medium Red Clover

- Can be turned under in fall for fertility for fall-planted vegetables, or left over the winter for a spring plow-down.
- If frost-seeded into a small grain, provides soil cover and nitrogen after the small grain harvest
- In livestock systems, can be used for grazing or hay
- In vegetable rotations, strips can be managed for long-term cover crop use or plowed down as a green manure at various points throughout the year.
- Excellent N source, fixes more N the longer it is left to grow (for maximum, leave until full bloom before plowing under or spraying)
- Will grow well in the cool, moist conditions of spring and fall, and slow down over the summer
- Flowers attract beneficial insects that can feed on harmful pests
- Can be drilled into thinning pastures to build up legume population.
- Can be drilled in late summer after sorghum or sorghum-sudan come off
- Can be interseeded into corn at last cultivation.

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