



ALBERT LEA SEED

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Alsike Clover (*Trifolium hybridum* L.)

Description

Alsike clover is a biennial forage that has smooth stems and leaves, reaching a height of 2-4 feet. The flowers are pink to white, and are borne along the length of the stem. The flower heads are much smaller than red clover, and the stems do not terminate in a flower as they do in red clover. Seeds vary from yellowish to dark green in color. It is a short-lived legume (2-3 years average) well adapted to short-rotation pastures or in hay mixtures on wetlands. It is well suited, in combination with grasses, for areas that have high precipitation or are poorly drained.

Overview

- Uses:** Hay—Pasture—Green Manure
- Strengths:** Can tolerate wet, heavy soils and flooded conditions.
Superior to red clover on acid, alkaline or cool soils.
Less susceptible to pests than red clover.
- Weaknesses:** Less productive than red clover
Tendency to lodge; plant with grasses
Can slow drydown of hay
Avoid droughty soils
Bloat potential if grazed alone
Can cause photosensitization

Plant Information

- Winterhardiness:** Good
- Drought-Tolerance:** Fair
- Wet soil tolerance:** Excellent
- Average Nitrogen Fixation:** 60 – 119 lbs N /acre
- Forage Yield Range:** 2 – 5 DM ton /acre
- Relative Forage Quality:** ~ 178 (index value)
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Seed and Seeding Info

Seeds per lb:	700,000
Seeding Rate Alone:	8 -- 10 lbs/acre
Seeding Rate in Mixtures:	1 -- 5 lbs/acre
Range of Seeding Dates:	Early spring or late summer
Methods of seeding:	Drill or broadcast & roll
Best seeding depth:	¼ inch
Best Soil types:	Poorly to moderately well-drained
pH tolerances:	6.0 – 6.5

Cultural and Harvest Information

As a grazing crop?

Alsike clover is quite tolerant of grazing. A rotational system where alsike is grazed to height of 2 to 4 inches following a regrowth period of 4 weeks will result in a persistent stand. Pasture management varies depending upon the grasses in mixture. High rates of nitrogen fertilizer will damage the alsike component. In hayfields, cutting below 2 inches will damage the stand.

**Animal management note: on pasture high in alsike clover content, take steps to introduce animals gradually to the forage or risk of bloat can be high. Horses can be sickened on pastures that have significant alsike components.

As a haying crop?

Alsike clover produces only one to two crops of hay per season. Most growth is put on in the cool spring temperatures. Cut the stand when ¼ to ½ of the stand is in bloom. Additional cuttings should take place when the clover is at ¼ bloom. If seeded with red clover, cut when red clover is at full bloom

As a cover crop?

Alsike Clover is not frequently used as a cover crop but can be used in situations where soil conditions are not suitable for red clover. Overly saturated or acidic soils will favor alsike clover over red clover as a cover crop. Alsike can be frost seeded under winter small grains then plowed down after the grain is harvested or cut for forage. Alsike can also be drilled along with spring grains and tilled under after grain or forage harvest.

Websites & Resources

Purdue Forage Information: Alsike Clover

<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/ForageID/legumes/alsike.htm>

Avoid Alsike Clover in Horse Pastures

http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/Forage_Issues/clover_horses.htm

University of Missouri Extension: Alsike Clover

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/M181-26>

Oregon State Forage Fact Sheet: Alsike Clover

http://forages.oregonstate.edu/php/fact_sheet_print_legume.php?SpecID=39&use=Forage

Montana State University: Alsike Clover

<http://animalrangeextension.montana.edu/articles/forage/Species/Legumes/Alsikeclover.htm>

Improving Pasture by Frost Seeding

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/pm856.pdf>

University of Minnesota: Pasture Management

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/Beef/components/homestudy/nlesson6.pdf>

Albert Lea Seed House Product Information Guide

The information presented here is based on the best agronomic information we could cull from University Publications and other sources (usually identified). The cultural and agronomic information is relevant only to farming in the upper mid-west. This information is not infallible and is not a substitute for experience and/or education.

We **do not guarantee** farming results based on this information.