Medium Red Clover

*Trifolium pratense*

Medium red clover is a short-lived perennial used to supply nitrogen. Unlike other legumes, it fixes a lot of nitrogen even in high-nitrogen soils. It has shade tolerance so it can be overseeded into small grains and incorporated in May of the following year. Since red clover seedlings tend to be slow-growing, it benefits from a nurse crop. It forms tap roots and is therefore useful for remediation of compacted soils. Red clover is also used for weed suppression.

| Land preparation | Prefers cool weather conditions, but well-adapted to a wide range of soil types and conditions. Tolerates wet conditions better than vetch.\(^1\) Can be overseeded on small grains, and if the soil is not crusted, can be overseeded in vegetable crops with no additional preparation to the land. |
| Seeding rate | Drill or broadcast at 10 lb/ac.\(^2\)
For a nurse crop, mix 2/3 annual ryegrass with 1/3 medium red clover, and sow 20-25 lb/ac. After seeding, roll the ground to improve seed-to-soil contact but do not break up soil aggregates. |
| Seeding date | February – March for frost seeding.
April – September.
Clover can be seeded with turf grass or small grains. |
| Seed sources | Local farm seed dealers, AgriCulver, Seedway, Lakeview Organic Grain. Good varieties of medium red clover include Redland III, Cinnamon Plus, and Bulldog.\(^3\)
Do not substitute Mammoth red clover for cover crop use. |
| Maintenance | Mow during the summer of the first year.\(^4\) It can be seeded between established rows, reducing soil compaction in well-traveled areas. |
| Control | Blossoms by May, incorporate when flowering. |
| Tips | Red clover supports aphid predators such as ladybeetles, green lacewing larvae, and hoverfly larvae.\(^5\)
Purchase a seed lot with high germination.
To use as a nurse crop, seed with annual rye in June-July, buckwheat in August, and oats in September. |
References:
1 www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/vetch
3 www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/research
5 http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/ agdex132

Disclaimer
This fact sheet reflects the current (and past) authors’ best effort to interpret a complex body of scientific research, and to translate this into practical management options. Following the guidance provided in this fact sheet does not assure compliance with any applicable law, rule, regulation, or standard, or the achievement of particular discharge levels from agricultural land.

Please cite as: