



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.



<i>Land preparation</i>	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.
<i>Seeding rate</i>	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.
<i>Seeding date</i>	February – March for frost seeding. April – September. Clover can be seeded with turf grass or small grains.
<i>Seed sources</i>	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.
<i>Maintenance</i>	Mow during the summer of the first year. ⁴ It can be seeded between established rows, reducing soil compaction in well-traveled areas.
<i>Control</i>	Blossoms by May, incorporate when flowering.
<i>Tips</i>	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:

- ¹www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/vetch
²The New Farm's Cover Crop Guide P 12, 1988.
³www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/research
⁴Clark, A. 2007. Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 3rd ed., Sustainable Agriculture Network. p.161.
⁵[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex132](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex132)

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For more information



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