



ALBERT LEA SEED

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Berseem Clover
(*Trifolium alexandrium*)

Description

Berseem clover is a summer annual legume with oblong leaflets and hollow stems. It grows upright and produces yellowish-white flowers with small round heads. The plants may grow as tall as 18 to 30 inches. It has a small tap root that is 4 to 6 inches. It is not frost tolerant and will winterkill in the upper Midwest. Berseem clover can be used to boost production on thinning alfalfa stands or as high protein forage. Berseem clover does not cause bloat. It is also an excellent choice for a cover crop due to its vigorous growth and good Nitrogen-fixing potential.

Overview

Uses: Hay—Silage—Pasture—Cover crop

Strengths: Productive
Fast growing
Tolerates wet ground

Weaknesses: Will not tolerate frost
Cannot be allowed to flower or it loses productivity
Susceptible to root-knot nematode

Plant Information

Winterhardiness: Poor

Drought-Tolerance: Good (similar to alfalfa)

Wet soil tolerance: Excellent

Average Nitrogen Fixation: 50 – 90 lb N /acre

Forage Yield Range: Potentially up to 4 DM ton /acre

Relative Forage Quality: 151 – 160 (index value)

Seed and Seeding Info

Seeds per lb:	160,000
Seeding Rate Alone:	8 – 12 lb /acre (drilled) ; 10 – 15 lb /acre (broadcast) with ~ 2 - 4 bushels of oats as a nurse crop
Seeding Rate in Mixtures:	3 – 6 lbs/acre
Range of Seeding Dates:	Early Spring (mid April to mid May) for forage, hay or cover crop – Mid August for late season cover crop
Methods of seeding:	Broadcast & roll or drill
Best seeding depth:	¼ - ½ Inch
Best Soil types:	Medium-loam soil - clay
pH tolerances:	6.5 – 7.5

Cultural and Harvest Information

As a grazing crop?

Berseem clover needs a relatively weed-free, firm seedbed for optimum germination. A nurse crop. (usually oats) aids in establishment and provides maximum tonnage. It does best under rotational grazing and must be grazed before it flowers or it loses productivity. It should not be grazed to less than 3 inches. It provides palatable and nutritious forage with a high relative feed value. The crude protein is equivalent or slightly higher than alfalfa. (18-28%)

As a haying crop?

Berseem clover is an excellent choice for haying. It should be sown in the spring with a nurse crop. Plants should be cut at 10 – 15 inch height when new shoots appear at the bottom of the stem. The first cutting will be 50 – 60 days after planting (when companion crop has headed out) and the second will be 45 – 50 days later. It must be cut before it flowers and should not be cut lower than 3 inches. When planted with a nurse crop it can be taken all together for silage or chopped & allowed to regrow. Seed with 2 – 4 bushels of oats for maximum tonnage.

As a cover crop?

Berseem clover is an excellent choice for a cover crop due to its vigorous growth, good N-fixation potential and sensitivity to frost. Spring tillage and soil preparation is not needed to control Berseem clover as it will not last the winter in the Upper Midwest. Berseem clover as a cover crop can be established in the spring or in Mid-summer for a fall cover crop. To kill berseem clover ahead of planting fall crops, allow it to go to full bloom & die back or use multiple diskings. If re-growth for green manure is desired clip the clover when it reaches 12-15 inches tall.

Websites & Resources

Oregon State Fact Sheets: Berseem Clover

http://forages.oregonstate.edu/php/fact_sheet_print_legume.php?SpecID=196&use=Forage

Managing Cover Crops Profitably: Berseem Clover

http://www.mccc.msu.edu/documents/managingccprof/ManagingCoverCropsProfitably_berseemclover.pdf

Hay & Forage Grower: Do's & Don'ts of Berseem Clover

http://hayandforage.com/mag/farming_dos_donts_berseem

Forage Yield & Nutritive Value of Oat Interseeded with Berseem Clover

<http://www.plantmanagementnetwork.org/pub/cm/research/2004/oat/>

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.