

Marion Germplasm Dillenius' Tick-Trefoil

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Association of Illinois Soil and Conservation Districts (AISWCD) announce the release of a tested ecotype of Dillenius' tick-trefoil *Desmodium glabellum* (Michx.) DC. for the Great Lakes Region.

As a tested release, this plant will be referred to as Marion Germplasm Dillenius' tick-trefoil to document its original collection location of Marion County, Illinois. It has been assigned the NRCS accession number 9055087. This alternative release procedure is justified because there is an immediate need for native legumes as alternatives for non-native species.

Description

Marion Germplasm Dillenius' tick-trefoil is a member of the pea family. This native perennial legume grows to 5 feet in height. Its tiny flowers are pink or purple and irregular in shape. The flowers turn light blue when spent. Bloom time is from midsummer to early fall and last about a month. There is no floral scent. Seeds are produced in pods that are covered with hooked hairs. Those hairs can attach to animal fur or human clothing, thus providing a mechanism for seed dispersal. The leaves are alternate, composed of three entire leaflets. They are egg shaped with little or no point. There is little or no stipule where the leaf is attached to the stem.

This tick-trefoil prefers partial sun and dry to slight dry conditions. It usually grows in soil that contains loam, clay loam, or some kind of rocky material. Its habitats include savannas, rocky upland forest, edges of wooded areas, thickets and limestone glades.

Method of Selection

Forty-nine collections of tick-trefoil (various species) were assembled from 8 states and 16 major land resource areas. Seeds from each collection were planted in the greenhouse for preliminary observation of growth characteristics in 1989. In 1990, plants from 40 of the collections were placed in propagation beds for a 2-year evaluation of survival, vigor, seed weight, plant height and width, bloom period, disease resistance, foliage production, and flower abundance. Five accessions including Marion Germplasm, were selected for further evaluation based on early and late season ranking summaries.

Advanced evaluations were completed in 1992 on the five accessions. The Marion collection and two other accessions were selected for release because of their superior survival, emergence, vigor, and foliage abundance.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Marion Germplasm is a selection of naturally occurring germplasm and has been unaltered. Based on the environmental evaluation process adapted by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Program, this species is non-invasive.

Anticipated Conservation Use

Marion Germplasm is intended for use in wild-life food plots as an alternative to introduced plant species. Seed from *Desmodium* species is used as a food source by several upland game birds and songbirds. Marion Germplasm is also an excellent deer browse.

Anticipated Area of Adaptation

This species range is throughout northern North America. The anticipated area of use is within the Great Lakes region, which is well within the species range.



Availability of Plant Materials

Generation 1 (G1), equivalent to Foundation Seed, will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and made available in limited quantities to commercial growers.



For More Information

Visit our Plant Materials website to find more information on using plants to solve conservation problems.

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

**USDA-NRCS
Rose Lake Plant Materials Center
7472 Stoll Road
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Phone 517-641-6300
Fax 517-641-4421)**

**Plant Materials Specialist
517-641-7831**

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Rose Lake Plant Materials Center

East Lansing, Michigan