

Alcona Germplasm Dillenius' Tick-Trefoil

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) 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 Alcona Germplasm Dillenius' tick-trefoil to document its original collection from Alcona County, Michigan. It has been assigned the NRCS accession number of 9055415. This alternative release procedure is justified because there is an immediate need for native legumes as alternatives for non-native species.

Description

Alcona Germplasm Dillenius' tick-trefoil is a member of the pea family. This native perennial forb grows from 2 ½ 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 mid-summer to early fall and lasts about a month. There is no floral scent. 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.

The tick-trefoil prefers partial sun and dry to slightly 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 characterizes 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 Alcona 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 Alcona collection and two others accessions were selected for increase due to their superior survival, emergence, vigor and foliage abundance.

Environment Impact Assessment

Alcona 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

Alcona Germplasm is intended for use in wildlife 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. Alcona 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>

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