

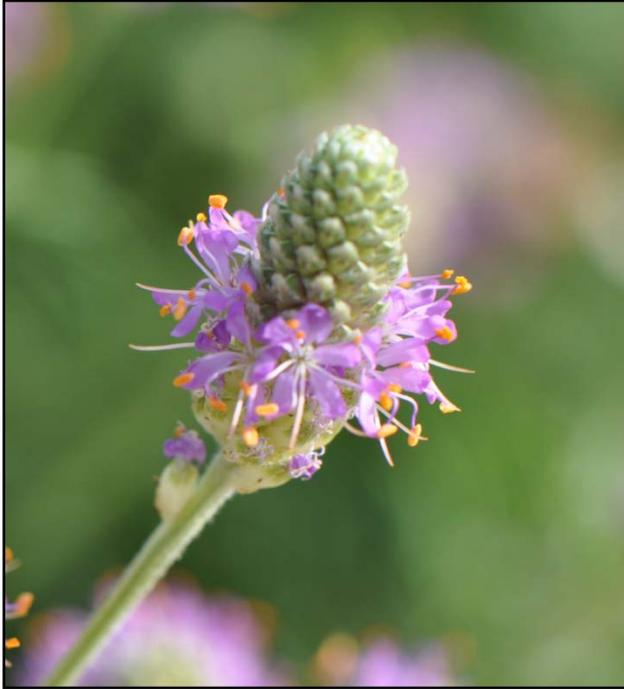


United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Plant Materials Program

# Cuero Germplasm Purple Prairie Clover

*Dalea purpurea* (Vent.)

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, TX



USDA-NRCS James E. "Bud" Smith PMC

Cuero Germplasm purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea* Vent.) was released from the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas in 2003.

### Description

*Dalea purpurea*, (Vent.) var. *purpurea*, purple prairie clover, is a native, warm season perennial legume. The plant has multiple stems up to 2.5 ft. long growing from a woody taproot. The leaves alternate and have an average of five leaflets per pinnate compound. Each leaf is about one inch long. The purple flowers appear on the end of stems and have cylindrical floral spikes which grow about two inches long. Seed pods, that are about ½ inch long, will produce 1 to 2 seed each. Purple prairie clover blooms from June through September with mature seed produced from mid-July to October. There are approximately 275,000 seeds per pound.

### Source

Cuero Germplasm purple prairie clover was collected from native plants located in the southern part of DeWitt County, approximately eleven miles from the town of Cuero, Texas.

### Conservation Uses

Cuero Germplasm may be used as a component in seed mixtures for pasture and range plantings to provide diversity to plant communities. Young foliage provides

high crude protein foliage for livestock, primarily sheep and goats, and wildlife. The seed is consumed by birds and small mammals. Purple prairie clover also attracts a wide variety of pollinator species including Southern Dogface butterflies and bees. It is also used to prevent soil erosion on dam structures, roadsides, and other critical erodible areas.

### Area of Adaptation and Use

Cuero Germplasm purple prairie clover is adapted to slopes along prairies, hillsides, and plains. It is widely distributed throughout central, west, and south Texas. It occurs mostly on sandy, sandy loam, and other moderately drained soils.

### Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

The full seedling rate for purple prairie clover is 3 pounds of pure live seed per acre. When planting this as a component of a seed mixture, the seeding rate should be adjusted to the desired percent of the mix. Seed should be placed from ¼ to ½ inch deep. Cuero Germplasm should be inoculated with type M inoculum. The inoculum should be applied to seed before planting at the rate recommended by the manufacturer. To maximize seed adhesion, apply inoculum to damp seed. Applying to dry seed is also recommended, but is generally not as effective. Mix seed thoroughly to ensure even distribution on all seed. Once seed has been inoculated, plant as soon as possible. Keep inoculated seed out of direct sunlight and hot, drying winds. Re-inoculation is required if seed is not planted within 24 hours of application.

Seedbed preparation should begin the year prior to spring planting to reduce weed problems during the first year of establishment. Work the site as necessary during the summer or early fall prior to establishment to create a firm, weed-free seedbed. Work should be completed in the fall to allow time for the soil to settle and accumulate moisture. Minimum and no-till operations should use herbicide applications to control weeds. Plantings should be well established before livestock grazing is permitted. Twelve months of grazing deferment should give plants enough time to become established. Contact your local U.S. Department of Agriculture-NRCS field office for assistance in planning and applying prescribed grazing plans.

A soil test should be conducted to determine the amount of fertilizer to apply to maintain a medium soil test level. Weeds may be controlled by mowing or with herbicides. Consult your local extension weed specialist for recommendations on herbicides for purple prairie clover.

### Seed and Plant Production

Purple prairie clover is harvested by direct combining. Average seed yield is 200 pounds per acre each year.

### Availability

*For conservation use:* Commercial seed is available from several commercial seed companies.

*For seed or plant increase:* Generation Zero (G0) seed (equivalent to Breeder seed) will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas and is available to seed growers through the Texas Foundation Seed Service in Vernon, Texas, phone number (940) 552-6226.



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### Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>



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