UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
AND
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF 'AU Ground COVER' Caley Pea

The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, and the Auburn University Alabama Experiment Station announces the release of 'AU GROUND Cover' caley pea, (Lathyrus hirsutus L.).

Farmers have used legumes in crop rotations for many decades to improve soil fertility in the Southeastern United States. Availability of relatively inexpensive chemical fertilizers contributed to a decline in their use as a nitrogen (N) source. More recently, producers have recognized legumes as valuable crops in water and soil conservation programs. Hence, there has been a renewed interest in these plants because of the benefits observed in systems that use conservation tillage for grain production.

Caley pea (Lathyrus hirsutus L.) is an introduced cool-season legume from the Mediterranean region. The name Caley derives from early collections of this pea from land owned by Mr. Caley of Central Alabama. In the Southeastern United States, producers have utilized caley pea as a cattle forage as well as a cool-season cover crop in soil conservation systems. Caley pea is mostly grown on wet clays of the lower Mississippi Delta area and on calcareous clays of the Alabama and Mississippi Black Belt. Currently, there are no caley pea cultivars available and most commercial seed is a mixture of caley pea and hairy vetch.

In 1983, at the Soil Conservation Service's Plant Materials Center at Americus, Georgia, researchers planted caley pea seeds from 140 ecotypes collected from fields and roadsides in central and northern Alabama for conservation tillage evaluation. This collection was grown in Americus, Georgia, where it was screened for adaptation, growth, winterhardiness, reseeding ability, and seed production.

In 1992 and 1993, we conducted tests of 23 selected caley pea ecotypes in Georgia (Americus Plant Materials Center) and Alabama (Winfield, Belle Mina, Marion Junction, Tallassee, and Monroeville). The experimental design was a randomized complete block with four replications in each location. We applied fertilizers according to soil test recommendations

We harvested the plots individually when 75% of the plants were blooming. At that time, we measured flowering date, canopy height measured at three places in the plot, and biomass fresh and dry yields.

The five most promising lines from these tests formed the composite C_3 called 'AU Ground Cover'.

APPROVAL FOR RELEASE OF 'AU GROUND COVER' CALEY PEA

James B. Newman
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United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D.C.

3-9-94
Date

State Conservationist
United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Auburn, Alabama

2-24-94
Date

Acting For Hershel R. Read
State Conservationist
United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Athens, Georgia

03-07-94
Date

State Conservationist
United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Columbia, South Carolina

3-2-94
Date

Director
Auburn University
Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station
Auburn, Alabama

January 18 1994
Date