

Illinois Grazing Manual Fact Sheet

SPECIES • COOL-SEASON PERENNIAL LEGUMES

Ladino Clover



General Information

White Clovers can be classified in three general groups: small, intermediate and large. Ladino belongs to the large group.

Ladino Clover is sown primarily with grass for pasture, but also used as hay or silage.

On an experimental basis, good stands of clover were established in a heavy fescue sod by over seeding one pound of ladino clover seed per acre for two consecutive years. No-till was used, but seed was sown during January and February so that freezing, and thawing worked the seed into the soil.

Adaptability

Ladino Clover will grow in soils considered too acid for red clover and alfalfa but is more productive if the pH is 5.5 or higher.

Ladino Clover needs adequate phosphorus and potassium for establishment and growth, and is especially responsive to cool, moist conditions.

Ladino Clover grows best between 50 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit and responds to irrigation about as much as any other legume. The shallow root system does not adapt to shallow, droughty soils.

Characteristics

Ladino Clover is a creeping plant with long basal runners that usually root at the nodes.

All of the leaflets rise from the horizontal stems on long stalks. The leaves and stalks are smooth and without hairs.

The flowers arise on single stalks from the basal runners and are typically white or pink.

The primary roots and stems of white clover usually die before the second year. The plant is perpetuated by the root systems developed at the nodes along the horizontal stems.

Establishment

Check with the Natural Resources Conservation Service or University Extension for proper seeding rates.

The seeds should be spread on a clean, firm seedbed, covered lightly, and can be planted with a cultipacker seeder, a grassland drill, or by broadcasting.



The seed should be inoculated with a commercial culture that is specific for white clover. Double the amount recommended on the container.

Management

Ladino clover is primarily not a hay crop. When used as hay, the field should be cut when the companion grasses will make the highest quality hay.

Restrict or temporarily exclude grazing during the spring to allow seed production. Graze companion grasses close during the fall to permit young clover seedlings to become established. Manage the pasture to maintain the stand and vigor of the companion grass so that it will afford at least half of the available forage to minimize the danger of bloat.

When harvesting seed, cut mature plants with a mower when most heads are brown. Cure in the swath or windrow and thresh with a pick-up combine.

The average seed yield is 75 to 100 pounds of seed per acre. Yields may be increased by using bees for pollination.

If managed for wildlife -as food for deer, wild turkeys and rabbits -benefits are maximized by controlled grazing by domestic livestock.

Where to Get Help

For more information about Ladino clover, contact the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service listed in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government," or the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.



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