Strawberry clover

Scientific name(s)

*Trifolium fragiferum*

**Strengths**

- High nutritive value and productive through spring and summer.
- Very grazing-tolerant and persistent.
- Drought and water-logging tolerant; tolerant of salinity.
- Free of oestrogen risks

**Limitations**

- Slow to establish; poor winter growth

**Plant description**

**Plant**: Densely stoloniferous, prostrate perennial. Rooting from nodes. Deep rooted; grows to 250 mm

**Stems**: Slender, branched.

**Leaves**: Size varies with cultivar. Plain (minority marked), hairless, trifoliate, glabrous, pubescent lower lamina, nerves parallel and conspicuous at margins. Leaflets 9-15 mm wide and 14-22 mm long.

**Flowerhead**: numerous; at maturity its creamy bladder shape resembles a strawberry fruit - with brown bits (dried petals)

**Flowers**: densely clustered, pink, oval/cone shaped, ~6 mm long, numerous, cream. Peduncles 100-220 mm long

**Pods**: small, ovoid contain 1-2 seeds

**Seeds**: truncate, lemon/brown; ~800,000/kg; high proportion of hard seed

**Pasture type and use**

A perennial providing excellent summer feed value where moisture available

**Where it grows**

**Rainfall**

Usually used in areas with >650 mm/yr; also used in lower rainfall (>500 mm) on low lying saline land

**Soils**

Tolerant of water-logging and moderately saline soil. Best on neutral to alkaline soil, pH 6-8. Tolerates pH (CaCl2) 4.8 and may respond to liming on acid soils. Persists and provides valuable summer green pick in isolated crab holes/Gilgai on basalt plains

**Temperature**

Wide adaption to temperature; good heat tolerance

**Establishment**

**Companion species**

**Grasses**: phalaris, tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, tall wheat grass, Puccinella

**Legumes**: Persian, balansa, white clovers

**Sowing/planting rates as single species**

1-2 kg/ha; sow scarified seed at 15-20 mm into a clean, finely worked seed bed and roll

**Sowing/planting rates in mixtures**
0.25-0.5 kg/ha

**Sowing time**
Early autumn or spring; low seedling vigour

**Inoculation**
Group B

**Fertiliser**
Apply ~20kg P/ha annually and correct any nutrient deficiencies, especially K, Mo, Cu, S

**Management**

**Maintenance fertiliser**
For optimum growth Olsen soil P > 15

**Grazing/cutting**
Once established, is very persistent on suitable soils. Tolerates heavy grazing pressure.

**Seed production**
Requires soil moisture through summer

**Ability to spread**
Seed spread by water, birds and livestock

**Weed potential**
Low; poor seedling vigour makes establishment difficult where other species established.

**Major pests**
Relatively tolerant compared to most domesticated clovers

**Major diseases**
No serious limitations

**Herbicide susceptibility**
Glyphosate. Damaged by most broad-leaf herbicides

**Animal production**

**Feeding value**
High protein content; high digestibility

**Palatability**
Palatable

**Production potential**
Good autumn, winter, spring

**Livestock disorders/toxicity**
Low isoflavone content - no risk to breeding livestock. May cause bloat in cattle; may increase frequency of urinary calculi in sheep

**Cultivars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Seed source/Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Australian Herbage Planr Cultivars Seedmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Seed Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>O'Connors (a turf type)</td>
<td>Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars Seedmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grasslands Onward</td>
<td>AusWest Seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grasslands Upward</td>
<td>AusWest Seeds</td>
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Denotes that this variety is protected by Plant Breeder's Rights Australia

**Further information**

**Acknowledgements**

Departments of Agriculture, Seed companies

**Author and date**

Kevin Reed

September 2008