



A collaboration between AWI, GRDC, MLA, RIRDC and Dairy Australia

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

Cultivar	Seed source/Information
Palastine	Australian Herbage Planr Cultivars Seedmark

O'Connors (a turf type)	Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars Seedmark
Grasslands Onward 	AusWest Seeds
Grasslands Upward 	AusWest Seeds

 Denotes that this variety is protected by Plant Breeder's Rights Australia

Further information

Acknowledgements

Departments of Agriculture, Seed companies

Author and date

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September 2008