

BERSEEM CLOVER

COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

Berseem Clover (*Trifolium alexandrinum*) is a fast growing summer annual legume that fixes and scavenges nitrates in the soil. Berseem clover is also an excellent choice in a cover crop mix for livestock grazing.



Identifying Features

- » Alternate leaves with oblong leaflets
- » Hollow, hairy stems
- » Short taproot

Cultural Traits

- » Summer annual legume
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 42° F
- » Cold temperature tolerance: 20° F
- » Seeding date: Early August to Early September* (F)***
- » Seeding date: Mid April to Mid May* (S)***

Planting Information*

- » **Drill** at ¼ - ½ inch (8 lbs./acre PLS**)
- » **Broadcast** (9 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (10 lbs./acre PLS)

*Planting information from Midwest Cover Crop Council (midwestcovercrops.org). Refer to local NRCS office recommendations (Iowa Field Office Technical Guide, Section 4, 340 Cover Crop) for seeding dates and rates pertinent to location specific financial assistance program requirements.

**Pure Live Seed

***F=Fall S=Spring

Additional planting information:

- » ~206,000 seeds/lb.
- » Increase seeding rate if using for forage/grazing.
- » Planting in a mixture can enhance performance as a cover crop.
- » Time interseeding to match cash crop growth and maturity to balance clover establishment and cash crop competition.
- » If growing for nitrogen production, consider using inoculation.



*Berseem Clover Seed
(Shown with seed treatment)*



Berseem clover sprout



Berseem clover leaves



Berseem clover field

C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratio

- » Berseem Clover 15:1 - 20:1

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Berseem clover field



Heavily nodulated berseem clover . (Chuck Ingels)

Performance

Dry matter = 200 - 2,000 lbs./acre per year
(Biomass quantity is dependent on planting and termination dates and precipitation.)

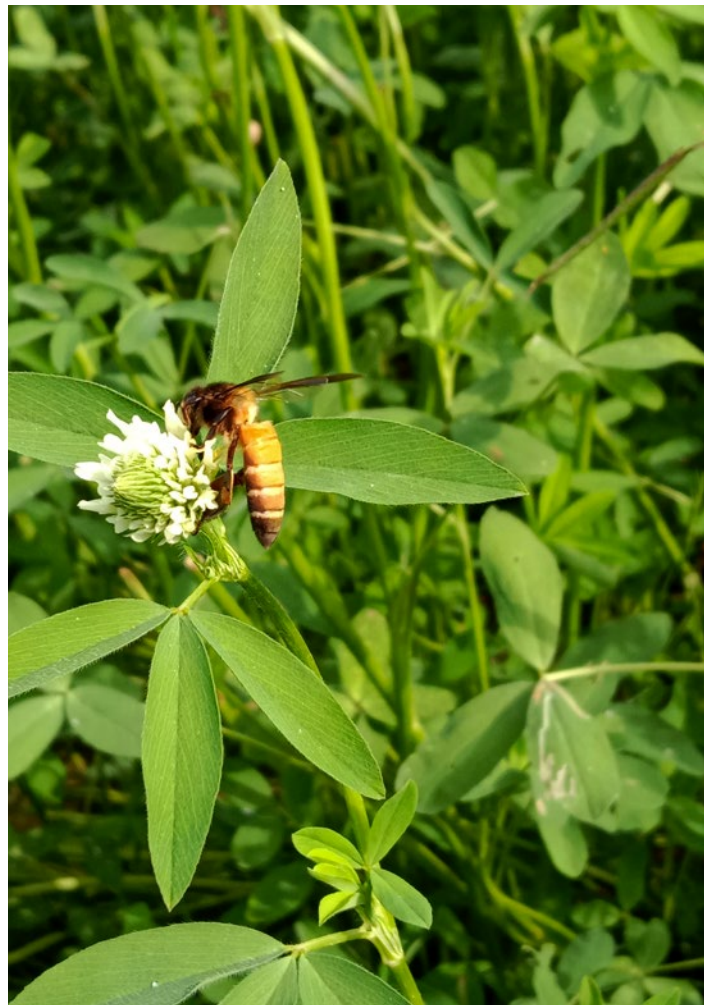
Performance Ratings

» Cash crop interseed (<i>early vegetative</i>)	Fair
» Cash crop overseed (<i>late seed fill</i>)	Fair
» Grazing quality	Excellent
» Mechanical forage harvest	Excellent
» Nitrogen fixer	Excellent
» Nitrogen scavenger	Fair
» Weed suppression	Good
» Compaction fighter	Good
» Erosion control	Fair
» Lasting residue	Fair
» Quick grower	Good
» Drought tolerance	Fair
» Low fertility tolerance	Good
» Shade tolerance	Good

Additional Considerations

- » Least winter hardy of all the clovers.
- » If planted in August, berseem clover can grow to 15 inches before frost, providing winter erosion protection.
- » Bee-friendly because white/ivory blossoms have no tripping mechanism.

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This fact sheet is a collaborative effort of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to provide cover crop options and information for Iowa landowners.