

Red Clover Is Widely Grown

URBANA, ILL.

Red clover is probably the most widely used clover in Illinois and is a real competitor that does many things well. It is a valuable legume in hay, haylage, and pasture mixes, important in pasture renovation (frost seeding and interseeding), and can be utilized as a cover crop.

Even though it is adapted to a wide range of soil types and can tolerate a pH as low as 5.5, it does best on fertile, well-drained soils with a pH of 6.2 to 6.6. It has a shallow, highly branched root system and so it does not grow well on light, coarse-textured soils with low moisture holding capacity.

There are two major types of red clover: medium (an early, two-cut type) and mammoth (a late, one-cut type). The medium type is preferred for Illinois.

Red clover is a short-lived perennial, which behaves as a biennial. Newer, disease resistant varieties last longer and so this short-lived

characteristic is changing.

Red clover is one of the easiest of the clovers to establish. The seedlings are very competitive with other legume and grass seedlings especially with a spring seeding when temperatures are cool and adequate moisture exists. When seeded with alfalfa, red clover can become the predominate species due to its seedling vigor and being more shade tolerant than alfalfa.

Red clover provides high quality forage throughout the grazing season. The clover should be allowed to flower once during the year and it reseeds easily.

Due to its pubescence, it is difficult to dry for hay. Red clover is known to cause some horses to salivate ("slobbers") and it can cause bloat.

Additional information can be found in the Illinois Agronomy Handbook, 24th Edition, which can be ordered online at <https://pubsplus.uiuc.edu/C1394.html> University of Illinois Extension offices can assist individuals obtaining a copy. Δ

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