

SPECIES USED IN WILDLIFE MIXTURES

Alfalfa

Where it is adapted, alfalfa alone or in mixtures with tall-growing grasses, is one of the highest yielding forage plants available. Alfalfa produces best on well-drained soil with good water-holding capacity and pH of 6.5 or above. It is long-lived and drought resistant. Choose varieties with good winter hardiness, disease resistance, and high yielding ability. Varieties with resistance to Phytophthora and Aphanomyces Root Rot adapt better to wetter soils.

Birdsfoot Trefoil

Birdsfoot trefoil does not cause bloat and is an excellent choice for permanent pasture. While not as productive as alfalfa in tons of dry matter per acre, birdsfoot trefoil is 26% more productive than alfalfa in pasture situations where yield is defined as beef per acre. Birdsfoot trefoil tolerates heavy, imperfectly drained soils with low pH. Used in mixtures with alfalfa on variable soils, trefoil establishes in low areas where alfalfa cannot, giving a complete stand of legume. Birdsfoot trefoil is slower to establish and is later in spring recovery than alfalfa or red clover. Once established, trefoil is very persistent making it a good choice for pasture, wildlife and roadside seedings.

Red Clover

Red clover is shorter lived than alfalfa. Older varieties usually provide only 1 to 2 years of hay or pasture production. Newer varieties will persist longer. If alfalfa can be successfully grown, it is a better choice. However, red clover grows on wetter and more acid soils than alfalfa and is a good choice for cropland where alfalfa production is questionable.

Ladino Clover

Ladino clover is a tall white flowering clover that tolerates wet, acidic soils. Ladino is very high in protein and should only be used in mixtures. Under conditions favorable for its growth it becomes very aggressive and may increase the bloat hazard. A major component of many deer and wildlife food plot mixtures. Plant 1/2-2 lbs. per acre in mixes.

Alsike Clover

This short-lived perennial tolerates wet and acid soils better than alfalfa and slightly better than red clover. On wet or acid soils alsike may be desirable even if it does not persist long in the mixture. While it survives, it will provide nitrogen to the grass, thus lowering fertility costs. Its relative short growth makes it desirable in pasture mixtures.

Timothy

This is one of the most widely used grasses in the humid northern United States. It is quite productive, in these areas. It is easier to seed than bromegrass. A large proportion of the total tonnage is usually produced in the first harvest. However, if rainfall is adequate and temperature is moderate, timothy will produce well during the summer.

Orchardgrass

Somewhat lacking in winter hardiness, orchardgrass will usually survive if snow cover is available. It has good seedling vigor and recovers faster than bromegrass after cutting or grazing. It is useful in mixtures containing bromegrass, particularly in pastures. Because of its vigor throughout the growing season, it adds grass and thus helps prevent bloat in legume-grass mixtures. It matures early and must be managed carefully.

Bromegrass

Smooth bromegrass is one of the most productive palatable grasses available. It is widely used in mixtures with legumes for pasture, hay or silage. When used in pasture mixtures, a faster recovering grass such as orchardgrass should be included to increase the grass content.

Reed Canarygrass

Previously considered to be suitable only for low wet areas, reed canarygrass is one of the most productive grasses on upland sites if adequately fertilized. Older varieties contain alkaloids that cause it to be less palatable than other grasses listed earlier. Newer "low alkaloid" varieties should be used for agricultural purposes. Adequate fertility increases productivity of reed canarygrass and may increase palatability. A very aggressive grass that may take over and dominate the planting if conditions are favorable.

Tall Fescue

A hardy, deep-rooted bunchgrass that is very tolerant of intensive grazing and animal traffic. Withstands heat and dry conditions better than other grasses. Used in pasture mixes, roadsides, waterways and turf types are becoming very popular in turf mixes. For livestock uses an endophyte free variety must be used to avoid palatability and health problems.

Perennial Ryegrass

A rapid growing high quality grass used in short term rotations for livestock or as a cover crop. Germinates very quickly making it useful in many mixes from turf to forage. Italian, diploid, intermediate, and tetraploid are all types of ryegrasses that are available. Tetraploid has superior hardiness and is the best choice for forage uses.

Festulolium

A cool season sod-forming grass that is easy to establish and spreads by tillers. Festulolium is a hybrid of Italian ryegrass and meadow fescue. Used in pastures and waterways, it is hardy if ample snow cover exists.

Chicory

A perennial taproot herb, chicory is drought tolerant and mineral rich. It produces abundant high protein leafy forage throughout the summer. Used in wildlife mixtures as a food for deer, grouse and turkeys. Plant 2-3 lbs. per acre in mixes.

Arrowleaf Clover

Latest maturing annual clover that re-seeds itself. Thrives on sandy or clay soils with adequate pH. Will not tolerate poorly drained soils. Pink to purple flowers with leaves having a distinct white V-mark that resembles an arrowhead. Used in wildlife mixtures.

Crimson Clover

Late maturing annual clover that tolerates medium acidic soils. Flowers are dark red (crimson) colored. Used in wildlife mixtures or as a green manure for cropland.

Berseem Clover

An annual clover with oblong leaves and an upright growth habit with yellowish-white flowers. Known for its vigorous forage growth, it is the most tolerant of wet conditions of all clovers. Used in wildlife mixes or as a green manure for cropland.

Persian Clover

An annual clover growing to three feet tall with purple flowers. Will tolerate a soil pH of 5.5 and has good re-seeding ability. Used very sparingly in wildlife mixes.

New Zealand Clover

A medium height white clover that is a short-lived perennial, but will re-seed itself. It will tolerate a lower pH than red clover and alfalfa while producing an abundance of high protein forage making it very useful for wildlife and livestock pastures. A major component in most perennial food plot plantings for good reason. Plant 2-4 lbs. per acre in mixes.

Kura Clover

A very hardy perennial clover with a deep taproot and extensive underground rhizome system. Very slow to establish but extremely persistent and aggressive after the third year. Tolerates acidic soils and heavy grazing. Used in pasture and wildlife mixtures. Plant 1/2-2 lbs. per acre in mixes.

White Dutch Clover

Very short white flowering clover found in lawns and wooded areas. Tolerates acidic soils and low fertility making it a good choice in wildlife mixtures. Very useful for trails and fringe areas where a low growing clover is desired. Plant 1/2-2 lbs. per acre in mixes, 6-8 lbs. alone.

Yellow Blossom Sweet Clover

A short-lived clover with a deep taproot and small serrated leaves. Yellow flowers are a favorite of bees. Used sparingly in pasture and forage mixtures.

Alyceclover

An annual legume that produces an abundant growth of high protein forage. Works well in wildlife mixtures with cowpeas. Tolerates low soil pH. Plant 15-20 lbs. per acre in the spring.

Crownvetch

Purple flowering legume used along steep banks and roadsides. Slow to establish but very aggressive and will form a complete cover after two years.

Rape

A short season brassica species that is classified as a biennial but will usually not over-winter in the north. Very succulent top growth of high nutrient value that stays green very late in the fall. Plant in the late summer for fall forage. Used in wildlife and deer mixtures. Also known as canola when grown as a grain crop for its oil. Plant 2-4 lbs. per acre in mixes, 8-12 lbs. alone.

Turnip

A short-season brassica species very similar to rape, except it also produces a significant root growth as well as a succulent top growth. Deer will eat the top growth in late fall and dig for the root growth in the winter. Plant 2 lbs. per acre in mixes or alone.

Bayou Forage Brassica

A cross of turnip and kale in the brassica species. Very similar to rape and turnip in many ways but lacking the root growth of turnip. Produces abundant forage, which may be preferred by deer over other brassicas. Plant 2-4 lbs. per acre in mixes, 8-12 lbs. alone.

Small Grains

Oats and Barley can be used as a cover crop in the spring or planted in the fall to provide a fall forage for deer. Best if used in combination with other fall attractants. Deer Creek Deer Oats has been shown to have superior hardiness and preference over other oat products and would be the product of choice for a fall planting. Plant 80-160 lbs. per acre.

Winter Wheat and Rye

Both are very hardy and vigorous small grain crops when planted in the fall. Use in combination with other fall attractants, as deer will eat the young growth in late fall. These crops will appear and start to grow very early in the spring providing essential food for wildlife at a critical time of year in the north. Plant 100 lbs. per acre in the fall.

Soybeans

An annual grain crop that produces beans in the fall when planted in the spring. Deer love the young vegetative growth and for this reason some people stagger the plantings through the summer to provide a summer forage. Deer and other wildlife will also feed on the mature beans through the winter. Plant 100 lbs. per acre.

Corn

An annual grain crop that can provide fall and winter food for deer and other wildlife. In most cases it requires at least a 5 acre field to have any effect. Plant 15-20 lbs. per acre for wildlife.

Sanfoin

A perennial legume that is very high in nutrient value similar to other forage legumes. Grows very slowly and does not tolerate low pH soils. Usage is very limited, as it does not handle competition from weeds or other forages well. Plant 25-30 lbs. per acre.

Buckwheat

An erect annual grain with low heat requirements for development. Very sensitive to frost and hot dry weather will also hurt grain formation. Used as a specialty food for humans and livestock and as a cover for wildlife.

Japanese Millet

A warm season annual grass that tillers and produces leafy forage. Can be grazed or used as a hay crop. Mainly used in wildlife mixtures to provide cover and forage. Plant 30-40 lbs. per acre.

Browntop Millet

A heavy seed producer that grows 2-3 feet tall. For quail, doves, turkey, and ducks when flooded. Plant 30-40 lbs. per acre.

Black Peredovic Sunflower

An oilseed crop that grows to six feet tall and matures in 100 days. Deer like the small plants, game birds and songbirds eat the mature seeds. A very popular planting for turkeys and pheasants. Plant 25-40 lbs. per acre.

Lab lab

A tall annual legume, native to Africa and Asia, that thrives in hot dry conditions. Often used in spring plantings with soybeans and peas for deer. Plant 5 lbs. per acre in mixes, 20 lbs. alone.

Small Burnett

A perennial forb that likes dry gravel or sandy soil where a lot of other crops won't grow. Spreads by rhizomes but establishes slowly and is not very competitive. Plant 2-5 lbs. per acre in mixes.

Cowpeas

An annual legume that is tall and viney producing a high protein forage that is usually planted in the spring with a soybean or annual grain mixture. Plant 25-35 lbs. per acre in a mixture.

Sesame

Birds love this annual herb that produces an oily seed in 120 days. Plant 5-7 lbs. per acre.

Lespedeza

A perennial herb in the pea family providing valuable cover for quail and other game birds. Tolerates poor soil and grows very slowly. Plant 20-30 lbs. acre.

Grain Sorghum

A tall growing plant similar to corn that provides a seed head at the top. Useful for pheasants and other game birds. Plant 10 lbs. per acre.

Switchgrass

A perennial bunchgrass that grows to 3-5 feet tall. Provides excellent nesting and winter cover for pheasants and other birds. Plant 10 lbs. per acre.

Wild Rice

Plant in lakes, ponds and marshes with 6-18 inches of standing water. Sown in late fall or early spring, seeds will germinate when water temperatures reach 60 degrees. Plant 25-40 lbs. per acre.

Chufa

A southern crop that produces a nut-like tuberous root growth that turkeys love. In agricultural crops chufa is known as yellow nutsedge, which is a severe weed challenge for many farmers. For this reason we do not recommend planting chufa.

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