

Berseem Clover

Forage/Cover Crop Tech Sheet



Berseem clover grows as a summer-annual or winter-annual depending on your plant hardiness zone. In the south, typically from central Virginia and further south, the Berseem can be planted in the fall and will over-winter as a winter annual crop. Since it is not a cold tolerant crop, the Berseem clover may winter kill and not consistently survive northern winters (Mid-Atlantic and Northern States). Therefore, it is best used as a spring seeded summer annual in these regions.

Berseem clover has oblong leaflets and hollow stems. It grows upright and produces yellowish-white flowers with small round heads. The plant may grow as tall as 18 to 30 inches. It has a small tap root that is 4 to 6 inches long. Berseem clover can be used to boost production on thinning alfalfa stands or as high protein forage, and is a legume that does not cause bloat. It is also an excellent choice for a cover crop due to its vigorous warm-season growth and good nitrogen-fixing potential.

Above 60 degrees F, Berseem will be ready to cut in about 60 days. Cutting every 30 days prior to frost encourages growth and N production.

If grown to maturity as a cover crop, it can fix 100-125 lbs/A of nitrogen, providing good fertility to precede a fall-planted small grain crop or fall-planted pasture or hay crop.

Can be planted late summer in the same growing window as fall oats; will winter kill and provide overwinter mulch residue, leaving the soil ready for an early spring planting.

Berseem prefers slightly alkaline loam and silty soils but grows in all soil types except sands. Soil phosphorus can limit berseem clover growth. Fertilize with 60 to 100 lb. P2O5/A if soil tests below 20 ppm. Boron also may limit growth, so test soil to maintain levels. Berseem tolerates saline conditions better than alfalfa and red clover.

Must be inoculated with R-type inoculant suitable for berseem clover and crimson clovers.



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High Energy Forages and Soil Building Cover Crops

At A Glance

- Productive, fast growing summer annual legume
- Tolerates wet ground
- Can work as a winter annual in zones 8a and above
- Not good for over-wintering in northern states—least winter-hardy annual clover
- Not resistant to root-knot nematode
- Shallow taproot
- Comparable to or better quality than alfalfa or crimson clover for feed
- Little or no risk of bloat

Best Uses

Grazing, Haylage/baleage, and cover crop. Can mix with alfalfa or small grains.

Establishment

Plant after soils are 50 degrees and rising

Seeding rate: 8-12 lbs/A drilled
15-20 lbs/A broadcast
3-6 lbs/A in mixtures

Depth: 1/4'-1/2"