

Crimson clover is the most commonly used cool season legume cover crop. It does not produce as much biomass or nitrogen as vetch, but is less prone to reseed. It is one of the largest seeded clovers and tends to be one of the earliest flowering of winter legumes. It can be used in integrated row crop/grazing systems as well as for winter grazing in pastures.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
AU Robin	Most suitable for grazing. Good biomass, early maturing- flowers about 2 weeks before Dixie. Seed is generally more expensive than Dixie. In some years seed may be difficult to find.	
Dixie	Good biomass. Seed is available and affordable. The standard crimson clover variety when variety is not specified.	

Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches) ¼ - ½		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre) 15 - 20	Use <i>Rhizobium leguminosarum biovar trifolii</i> inoculant.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre) 20 – 30	Not recommended for overseeding in dormant pasture	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

Termination Information

Information	Source
<p>Crimson clover can be terminated with heavy grazing. Crimson clover can also be terminated by herbicides, mowing, or tillage.</p> <p>Legumes take longer to kill with herbicides than grains. Plan on 2 ½ to 3 weeks for clover to fully die. It is difficult to kill clover with rolling/crimping alone. Several passes may be needed as clover may not reach the minimum 14 inches in height needed for effective crimping. Clover may be terminated by mowing after early bud stage.</p> <p>Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.</p>	Balkcom - personal communication, Managing Cover Crops Profitably

Continue to next page...

Cultural Traits

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	2,000 - 5,000		Managing Cover Crops Profitably, Unpublished Literature Review in Piedmont – Gaskin
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	50 - 125		Managing Cover Crops Profitably, Unpublished Literature Review in Piedmont – Gaskin
Life Cycle	Cool season annual legume		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Growth Habit	Semi-upright		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Preferred Soil pH	6.0 – 7.0	Tolerant of a wide variety of soil types	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Relative Seed Cost (\$/acre)	\$\$		Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	N/A		
Cautions	Grazing legumes can cause bloat in cattle. Crimson clover has moderately low risk of bloat.		

Forage Traits

Information	Source
Crimson clover has excellent forage quality and provide some grazing in late fall and abundant production in early spring. Grazing legumes can cause bloat in cattle. Crimson clover has moderately low risk of bloat.	UGA Forages Virginia Cooperative Extension
Crimson clover can be mixed with small grains to extend the grazing season.	

Sources:

Managing Cover Crops Profitably: <https://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books>

UGA Forages: <https://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/species-and-varieties/cool-season/crimson-clover.html>

Virginia Cooperative Extension: <https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/DASC/DASC-93/DASC-93.html>