

Building Up Demand For Spring

If Americans don't catch spring fever this year, then we've got a real problem on our hands. Surely many feel a pent-up demand to turn the dirt, see green grass, work in yards. The rough, long winter - full of snow, ice and cold temperature - is damaging both warm season and cool season grasses and legumes. Acres and acres of lawns and fields will need repaired.



When spring actually does come, we anticipate good movement as it relates to renovation work. Also, numerous parts of the country are seeing increases in new housing construction. Winter has reduced hay inventories in select regions. With grain markets lower, interest in forage plantings may increase. Finally, cover crops are cropping up everywhere.

This Spring, be sure to let Smith Seed Services help you satisfy these growing demands with products and services that will keep them coming back!

Alsike Clover *Trifolium hybridum* L.

Use it where other legumes won't grow!

As concrete screws are to regular screws, so is alsike to most clovers. Alsike isn't used or preferred under normal conditions, but when needed, its irreplaceable. Those specific conditions include poorly drained, even waterlogged ground and acidic soils. In these conditions, alsike can still provide red-clover quality forage for multiple years (in southern locations, alsike acts as an annual).

As a biennial, alsike usually lives 2-3 years, and produces 1-2 good harvests per year. Reaching a mature height of 2-4 feet, alsike works well with lower growing or managed grasses. Since it is susceptible to lodging, it is normally planted as a grass/legume mix. It is also used in combinations with red clover for planting on fields with portions that are either water-logged or have a lower pH.

Alsike is well adapted to northern climates and cooler summers. It also has good winter hardiness. Preferring wetter soils over droughty soils, alsike will tolerate lengthy spring flooding and completely waterlogged soil. Alsike does not tolerate shade. Alsike makes very good quality hay in a grass/hay mixture and is also quite tolerant of grazing*. Forage quality is very high, similar to alfalfa. Alsike can fix 60-120 lbs N/acre/year and 2-5 tons DM forage yield. While not commonly used as a cover crop, it may be worth considering for acidic or waterlogged soils.

Alsike leaves are smooth and sit on semi-erect, long, thin stems. Flowers are white or pale-pink. The flowers bend down and turn brown after pollination. Like red clover, alsike has a branch tap root that grows as deep as 4 feet.

* There are some cautions when grazing alsike, specifically as it relates to horses and other livestock, where toxicities, bloat, and skin irritation issues exist. While alsike is very tolerant of grazing, learn more about these issues before recommending or using alsike in situations where grazing may occur.

Over the next number of months, we intend on highlighting select clover species, as well as adding information about specific clovers to our SmithSeed.com website.



NITRO-COAT



for Clover

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