Cotswold Seeds Ltd
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Sowing & Growing: Crimson Clover



Crimson clover (*trifolium incarnatum*) is a nitrogen fixing, short term annual legume and true clover. The flower head is a rich crimson to red colour and shaped like a cone. Each plant has a slender taproot, with lateral branches. Crimson clover is quicker to establish than some of the long term clovers, its root system helps to prevent erosion and build soil fertility.

Suitable Soils: Crimson clover prefers to be sown into well drained soils over heavy clay soils.

When to Sow: Sow in warm soils in spring and not too late into the autumn. Crimson clover is not truly winter hardy and will be susceptible to hard frosts.

Sowing Rate: 1.5 g/m2 - 6kg per acre - 15kg per ha.

Preparation: The most successful results come from sowing into a newly prepared seedbed. Aim to cultivate the top soil to about 5cm, with a light cultivator or discs. The finished seedbed should be fine but firm, with no clods. Several passes with a cultivator may be needed to achieve this.

Sowing: Clover seed is small and should be broadcast or drilled to a shallow depth (not more than 10mm). Sowing too deep will reduce the germination dramatically. The soil should be rolled after sowing to increase seed to soil contact.

Management: The plant will withstand light topping early in its life cycle, if needed to control annual spring weeds. Severe grazing or cutting will reduce yield. Grazing/cutting during or just after flowering normally kills off the plant. Crimson clover does not suffer from the same sickness issues as red clover.

It takes about 3 months to flower from sowing (12 weeks), 3-4 weeks longer than persian clover.

Crimson clover will generally die off over the winter months. If this survives through the winter it can effectively be terminated mechanically, cutting after the early bud stage or incorporating with machinery.

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