

FORAGE FOCUS

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Wrightson Seeds

AGWEST® Bartolo bladder clover

Background

Ley-Farming on fine textured soils in southern Australia is largely based on medics. The continued sustainability of medics is however, limited given the effects of soil acidification and intensive management demands associated with the control of pests and diseases. Consequently alternative species are continually being investigated.

Research has shown that bladder clover is a highly productive species on mildly acid loam and clay soils. Important attributes include the hard seed content and breakdown patterns both of which are highly desirable. One of the most important attributes of bladder clover is its demonstrated capacity to avoid losses of a high proportion of the available seed bank following out of season rain or false breaks. In low rainfall environments, this issue compromises subterranean clover.



Description

AGWEST® Bartolo is a semi-prostrate aerial seeded clover that does not shed seed after maturity. Bladder clover is a self-pollinating species and produces small pink flowers. Seeds are contained in a papery pod which itself is surrounded by a balloon-like papery calyx; the basis for the common name bladder clover.

The whole inflorescence may produce up to 150 seeds. Seeds are around 2 mg in size and are yellow in colour and physically very hard.

AGWEST® Bartolo has a midseason maturity, flowering approximately 105 days after emergence from a mid May sowing in Perth.

Requirements for growth

- Suited to regions with 325 to 500 mm annual rainfall.
- Can grow successfully on mildly acid and alkaline sandy-loam, loam and clay soils (pH 5 to 8 CaCl₂).
- Seed should be inoculated with Group C inoculants for clovers and is normally sown at 2 to 6 kg/ha in mixes or 10 kg/ha as a straight.

Pest and disease tolerance

- Low to moderate sensitivity to red-legged earth mite.
- Moderately tolerant to blue green aphid and lucerne flea.
- Tolerant of native budworm.
- Little or no sensitivity to clover scorch disease. Occasional infections of *pseudopeziza* leafspot have been observed in high rainfall areas.
- Susceptible to CMV, BYMV and AMV viruses (similar to subterranean clover).

Field performance and management

- High herbage production across a range of soil types.
- Excellent grazing tolerance once established.
- Seed becomes germinable in autumn, offering some protection against false breaks of season.
- AGWEST® Bartolo is hard seeded with over 50% of the seed remaining hard after one summer. It is suited to self-regenerating ley systems or short-term phase farming systems.

Breeding

AGWEST® Bartolo bladder clover was collected from Cyprus in 1987. Dr Angelo Loi and Mr Bradley Nutt and the DAFWA Pasture Breeding Team within the National Annual Pasture Legume Improvement Program developed it. Funding for its development was provided by GRDC, AWI and DAFWA. AGWEST® Bartolo is the first cultivar of bladder clover released to world agriculture.

AGWEST®
Bartolo
bladder clover