

### **Birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus* L. )**

#### Description / Uses

BFT is a long-lived perennial forage legume grown primarily for pasture and hay  
BFT is fine-stemmed, leafy, and does not cause bloat

#### Quality

Harvested at flower, bft is equal in quality to alfalfa and red clover Protein declines with maturity and becomes more fibrous.

#### Advantages

Does not cause bloat  
High quality  
Long-lived perennial  
Reseeds itself by seed shattering

#### Disadvantages

More difficult to establish than alfalfa  
Slower regrowth compared to alfalfa  
Less N-fixation than alfalfa  
Not a tall growing plant

### **Sweet Clover (*Melilotus* spp. )**

#### Description / uses

Oldest legume species brought to the U.S.  
Wide range of adaptability to soil and temperate zones  
Cultural practices are the same as alfalfa

#### Advantages

An excellent soil-improvement crop  
Very deep root system and adaptable to a wide range of soils.  
Excellent source of nectar for honeybees

#### Disadvantages

May become a weed problem due to hard seed content  
Contains coumarin, which prevents blood clotting and animals may bleed to death

### **Alsike Clover (*Trifolium hybridum* L.)**

#### Description / Uses

A short-lived perennial that is adapted to the upper Great Lakes region and northern California  
Management and uses are very similar to that of red clover Susceptible to the same insects and diseases as red clover Susceptible to the same diseases as red clover

#### Advantages

Adapted to cool climates and wetter soils  
Tolerates more acidic and alkaline soils than alfalfa and other clovers

#### Disadvantages

Will produce only one harvestable crop per year  
May be injured by prolonged hot weather  
Hard to determine full bloom because it is a indeterminate plant

## **Crimson Clover (*Trifolium incarnatum* L.)**

### Description / uses

Winter annual that is best adapted to the southeastern U. S .  
In Maine and northern states it is considered a summer annual

### Advantages

High quality can be obtained if harvested prior to bloom  
Will aid in soil retention when planted for a winter/spring grazing crop  
Susceptible to few disease since it is a winter annual  
Heavy pubescence reduces most insect problems

### Disadvantages

Old varieties have a high hard seed content similar to sweet clover  
Must reseed every year which increase costs

## **Vetches (genus *Vicia*)**

### Description / Uses

Widely grown in temperate regions of the U.S.  
Most cultivated species are: hairy vetch, crown (common) vetch, and purple vetch

### **Hairy vetch**

The most common of the vetches  
Most winter-hardy of the three  
Adapted to a wide range of soils  
Commonly used as a cover crop following wheat

### **Crown (common) vetch**

Is restricted to the southern states due to its low winter-hardiness  
Best suited to well drained, highly fertile soils  
Resistant to root knot nematode making it a good rotation crop