



PERSISTENCE & SPREADING
Kura Clover
Trifolium ambiguum L.

Kura clover has an extensive root and underground (rhizome) stem system and has shown promise as a forage legume and living mulch. Once established, plants spread vigorously. Initial spring regrowth consists of an upright stem containing a large white-pink flower. Following defoliation, all re-growth consists of leaves and petioles which originate from crowns. The forage is succulent and not hairy. The leaves are more pointed and usually larger than those of other clovers. Kura clover is disease resistant, tolerant to stressful environmental conditions and has superior persistence to heavy grazing/cutting than any other forage legume. To reduce incidence of livestock bloat, pair kura clover with vigorous pasture grasses such as reed canarygrass, timothy, or orchardgrass.

Kura as a Grazing Crop?

Kura clover has great potential as a pasture legume for either continuous or rotational grazing. It has excellent long term carrying capacity and gain/acre potential. Forage grazed by livestock is primarily leaves and is very high in nutritive value. Due to the lack of seedling vigor, strict attention will have to be given to ensure stand survivability. Forage production in the first two years is often low; it is said that kura clover “sleeps the first year, creeps in the second year, and leaps in the third year”. Once established, however, the stand will be vigorous and high yielding. To prepare for planting either burn-down in the fall or maintain diligent non-chemical weed control. Allow grasses in mixture to reemerge or sow slow emerging grass species. Mixing with red clover can be problematic as the seedlings are often too vigorous and will outcompete the kura.

As a Living Mulch?

Kura clover has been investigated as a potential living mulch in silage and grain corn. It provides nearly all of the N requirements of the corn, maintains a permanent ground cover to protect soil, and will recover to full production the following season. Careful management must be implemented to ensure adequate seeding establishment and prevent competition with the grain.

As a Haying Crop?

Kura clover’s prostrate growth habit and high moisture content make haying difficult to impractical.

Uses: Pasture, Forage, Living Mulch

Pros

- Very persistent once established (>15 years of continuous grazing).
- Very winter hardy.
- Will withstand heavy traffic.
- Very high nutritional value.

Cons

- Poor seedling vigor.
- Difficult to establish (2-3 yrs).
- Bloat potential in pure stands.
- Aggressive and over-competitive growth habit once established.

Plant Information

Winterhardiness: Excellent

Drought-Tolerance: Excellent

Wet soil tolerance: Good

Avg N Fixation: 20 - 160 lb N / A

Forage Yield Range: 1.5 - 4 t DM / A

RFQ: 173 - 196 (index value)

Seed and Seeding Info

Seeds per lb: 215,000

Seeding Rate (Alone): 12 - 16 lbs/A

Seeding Rate (Mixture): 6 - 10 lb/A

Seeding Date: Spring

Seeding Methods: Drill or Broadcast

Seeding depth: ¼" - ½"

Soil Types: Tolerates most soils

pH tolerances: 6 to 7.5



