

BLADDERPOD

Cleome isomeris Greene

Plant Symbol = CLIS

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Alternate name
Bladderpod spiderflower

Uses
Wildlife: It serves as a good wildlife plant for upland game, especially quail. It does provide some escape cover and shade for loafing areas and is a source of food. The pea-like seeds are taken readily by a variety of game and song birds.

Ethnobotanical Uses: The Diegueno Indians used the seeds and flowers for food.

Status
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description
Caper Family (Capparaceae). Bladderpod is a native, erect, round, shrub four to six feet high and at least as wide. The leaves are alternate and trifoliate. The flowers, which are yellow with six stamens, bloom much of the year and are quite attractive. The seed pods are large, inflated and pendulous with only a few hard, smooth seeds with a prominent end curved.

Distribution
Bladderpod often grows in disturbed areas, and also on coastal bluffs, hills and desert washes. The

shrub's native distribution is southern California, Baja California, and Arizona from 200 to 3,000 feet in elevation. For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation
This native plant is a desert type. In California, it occurs in San Luis Obispo County and in much of lower California, and in the vicinity of Tehachapi, as well as western Fresno and eastern Monterey counties. In the Bakersfield and Tehachapi regions, it can be found to an elevation of 4,000 feet. In cultivated plantings, it has been grown as far north as southern Butte County. It has a wide range of temperature tolerance from below freezing to over 100 degrees F. It is very drought tolerant. Little is known at this time about its adaptation to soils below a pH of 6.

Establishment
The large seed germinates readily. It requires no treatment before planting. It may be direct seeded on a prepared seed bed in the fall to early spring at a rate of one pound of seed per acre. It should be planted no deeper than one inch. Direct seeding becomes progressively less successful as one moves north, because of competition from annual grasses.

For best results with small plantings, the seed should be propagated in flats and the seedlings should be transplanted to gallon cans. Seedlings can be transplanted to the field in either the spring or fall.

Management
This shrub requires good weed control measures, such as hoeing, cultivating, and chemical control during the establishment period. Elimination of all weed competition on the planting site prior to direct seeding is essential for good stand establishment. Normally, the spring rains are sufficient to establish seedlings when directly seeded on deep soils. Potted plants will normally require some summer water depending on the locality.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether bladderpod is susceptible to livestock damage. Generally, damage occurs only when animals are forced onto it by a lack of preferred feed.

Pests and Potential Problems

This shrub must have good weed control measures such as hoeing, cultivation, or by chemical control.

Seeds and Plant Production

Seed may be collected easily from wild plants by stripping pods from plants and extracting seed. A limited amount of seed is normally available from the California Department of Fish and Game for wildlife plantings. Seed is also available from commercial seed collectors.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

'Dorado' Cultivar- Dorado grows naturally on the desert soils and prefers a pH of 6.5 or higher. It is best adapted to the southern part of California up to elevations of 1,220m (4,000 feet), but several successful plantings have been made in the central and northern part of Sacramento Valley.

Dorado has shown excellent performance as a conservation plant on critical areas, upland game cover and food, and for environmental enhancement on deep to moderately deep, medium to finely textured soils that are well-drained.

References

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