



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza



Source Identified
Conservation Plants
Developed by the
Elsberry Plant
Materials Center,
Elsberry, MO



North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm of Roundhead Lespedeza (*Lespedeza capitata*) (Michx.) Zones 2 and 3 were released in 1996, Zone 1 was released in year 2000.

Cooperating agencies in these releases were: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), University of Northern Iowa (UNI), Iowa - Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program (IRVMP), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA).

The Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza is recommended for use in plantings on roadside re-vegetation, critical areas, wildlife food and habitat, parks, and recreational areas, and prairie restoration. Each zone is recommended for planting within its zone of origin. Zone 1 (Northern) is from the Northern 3 tiers of counties in Iowa. Zone 2 (Central) is from the Central 3 tiers in Iowa and Zone 3 (Southern) is from the Southern 3 tiers in Iowa.

Lespedeza capitata is a desirable component in warm-season grass mixtures, providing nitrogen and adding protein to the forage. The forage of roundhead lespedeza is consumed by all classes of livestock, and the seed is readily utilized by a variety of wildlife species.

Description

North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza, Zones 1, 2 and 3 are tall native warm season perennial legumes that grows 3.5 to 4.0 feet high. The entire plant is covered with fine silvery hairs. The leaves occur alternately along the erect stems. They have three leaflets of medium to narrow elliptic shape. The flowers are creamy white and bloom August through September. The flower

heads are found growing close to the erect stems and are mostly near the top of the stems.

Roundhead lespedeza responds as a decreaser to grazing pressure or repeated, close defoliation. It is compatible with warm-season grasses when well established. There is moderate to strong tolerance to burning when dormant.

Origin

North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm of Roundhead Lespedeza, Zones 1, 2 and 3 originate from locations in the North, Central and Southern counties in the state of Iowa, thereby making these accessions well adapted to these counties.



An Illustrated Guide to Iowa Prairie Plants

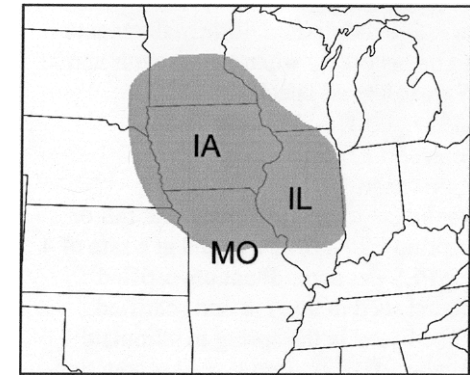
Adaptation

This plant grows naturally in diverse habitats such as dry prairie, open woodland soils, well-drained or sandy prairies in all but the northern portions of the tallgrass region, becoming uncommon north of Iowa. Roundhead lespedeza is moderately drought tolerant and

winter hardy with some tolerance to shade. It performs best in areas receiving at least 20 inches of precipitation but will survive in moisture accumulating sites in semiarid zones.

The area of adaptation for the Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza Zones 1, 2 and 3 includes all counties located in the state of Iowa and adjacent states.

Recommended Area of Adaptation Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza



Establishment

Roundhead lespedeza can be easily established by using a native grass drill with a legume seed box attachment. For a solid stand seeding, plant in late fall or early spring into a firm seedbed at a rate of 4 pounds PLS (pure live seed) per acre. Seed should be planted at a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Use scarified inoculated seed when seeding in the spring, and unscarified inoculated seed when making a fall dormant planting. The number of seeds per pound averages 154,000. Decrease the seeding rate to the percent composition desired in the mixture.

A cool moist stratification for ten days is required.

Management

Plantings should be well established before livestock grazing is permitted. Weed control can be accomplished by mowing over the height of the lespedeza plants about one month before regular flowering. This promotes lateral bud development and greater floral display. A grass herbicide, such as 'Poast' controls grassy weeds. Delaying defoliation until after seed maturity restores plant energy for greater production and persistence while allowing reproduction. Except for conservative defoliation, little maintenance should be necessary when grown with native warm season grass species.

Commercial Production

For a solid stand seeding, plant late fall or early spring into a firm seedbed at a rate of **4** pounds PLS per acre. Plant unscarified inoculated seed in late fall and scarified inoculated seed in the spring to stimulate germination. For optimum seed production, rows should be spaced 30 inches apart, or at a spacing to accommodate available equipment. During establishment, irrigate only to avoid plant stress and not at all between germination and the **4-5** leaf stage. **For** pure stand, apply fertilizer at a rate of about 300 pounds of 5-10-5 per acre during seedbed preparation.

Two years are usually necessary for stands to develop and produce. Some plants may flower the first growing season with favorable growing conditions. Seed yields should average approximately 250 bulk pounds per acre on a well-managed stand.

Availability

Foundation seed of Iowa Germplasm Roundhead Lespedeza has been allocated to Iowa Seed growers by the USDA-NRCS.

For More Information

Visit our Plant Materials Internet site at <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov> to find more information on solving conservation problems using plants.

USDA-NRCS

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