



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service

Program Aid Number 1312

# 'Appalow' *sericea lespedeza*



## 'Appalow' sericea lespedeza

'Appalow' sericea lespedeza is recommended as a dense, low-maintenance ground cover to prevent erosion and stabilize soil on roadbanks, surface-mined land, logging roads, and other disturbed sites. It was released in 1978 by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station.

### Description

'Appalow' sericea lespedeza. *Lespedeza cuneata* (Dumont) G. Don, is a perennial, warm-season legume. Its many decumbent stems are narrow and relatively short and seldom grow more than 10 inches off the ground. A single plant may cover an area as large as 6 square feet.

Leaflets of 'Appalow' are small, dark green, and more numerous than those of other cultivars of sericea lespedeza. Flowers, pods, and seeds are typical of the species.

The plant begins to grow from crownbuds in April. Flowers bloom in August, and the seed matures early in October.

### Adaptation

In adaptation to climate and soils, 'Appalow' is similar to other cultivars of sericea lespedeza. It has been tested and has performed satisfactorily in the area shown on the map.

'Appalow' is adapted to a wide variety of soil conditions but does not tolerate poorly drained soils. It grows best on well to excessively drained soils and in full sun; it is not very shade tolerant.

'Appalow' has good drought tolerance. Well adapted to medium-textured soils, it also thrives on coarse-textured soils that are low in fertility, such as those with a high sand, gravel, or shale content. Sericea lespedeza grows better than most other legumes in acid soils and can tolerate a pH of 5.0.

### Establishment

If the site is accessible to farm equipment, seed of 'Appalow' can be drilled or band-seeded at a depth of one-fourth to one-half inch. On steep slopes or rough sites

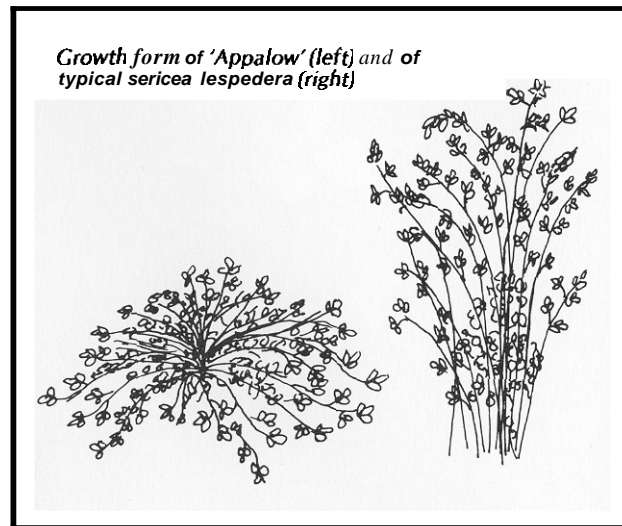
where drilling is not possible, the seed can be broadcast or hydroseeded. Seed must be inoculated at the time of planting with a specific bacterium (*Rhizobium* spp.) of the cowpea group.

For spring plantings, the recommended seeding rate is 30 pounds per acre for hulled, scarified, inoculated seed. Spring seeding dates range from February 15 to May 1; 'Appalow' can be planted before all chance of frost is past. Early spring seedings produce the best results, but unhulled, inoculated seed can be sown in late summer or early fall at a rate of 45 pounds per acre.

'Appalow' is slow to develop solid stands. When planting to stabilize the soil, always include a rapidly growing grass to provide initial cover. For disturbed sites, include 5 to 10 pounds of ryegrass or 15 to 20 pounds of tall fescue with the recommended rate of 'Appalow'.

On severely eroded sites, mulch is essential for moisture retention while seedlings are becoming established. Anchor the mulch to prevent wind from blowing it away.

Lime is essential for establishment if pH is below 5.0 and is recommended if pH is below 6.0. In the absence of soil tests, apply 2 tons per acre of ground agricultural



Cover: Overhead closeup view of 'Appalow'



'Appalow' formed a dense ground cover on this coarse-textured, infertile surface-mine spoil.

limestone and 300 to 400 pounds per acre of 10-20-20 fertilizer or the equivalent before seeding

Where site conditions allow, work the lime and fertilizer into the soil surface. Fertilizer can be applied with hydro-seeding equipment if necessary. It should not be necessary to add lime and fertilizer after stands are established.

### Propagation

'Appalow' sericea lespedeza generally produces a good seed crop. Establish seed production fields by drilling 12 to 15 pounds per acre of hulled, scarified, inoculated seed in 9- to 12-inch rows.

To reduce competition from perennial weeds, use a field that was in a clean-cultivated row crop for at least the previous year. Control weeds during the first year by clipping them just above the sericea lespedeza plants. After the first year, the stand of 'Appalow' probably will be dense enough to choke out weeds. Selective herbicides can be used if necessary to help control weeds.

The low, dense growth pattern of 'Appalow' can cause some problems in harvesting the seed. The dense vegetation inhibits seed drying before combine harvesting. Morning dew and excessive rainfall can also delay harvesting. Seed drying is enhanced on sites with full-sun exposure, good air drainage, and coarse-textured soil.

Seed yields of 50 to 150 pounds per acre have been obtained. There are about 370,000 seeds in a pound of cleaned, hulled seed of 'Appalow'.

### Availability

Seed growers can obtain 'Appalow' foundation seed from Kentucky Seed Improvement Association, P.O. Box 12008, Lexington KY 40579. For more information about producing and using 'Appalow' sericea lespedeza, contact your local SCS or conservation district office.

Programs and assistance of the United States Department of Agriculture are available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, or national origin.

