

BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL

Birdsfoot trefoil is an excellent non-bloating pasture legume that can also be harvested for hay and silage. It grows under a wide range of soil conditions, and persists longer and performs better than other legumes under poor soil conditions, such as low fertility, acidity and poor drainage. It is also persistent when grown with Kentucky bluegrass, reed canarygrass and timothy.

Performance trials of birdsfoot trefoil were established at Rosemount in 1997, 1998, 2001 and 2003, and at Grand Rapids in 1998 and 2001. The trials generally are harvested twice at Grand Rapids and two or three times at Rosemount. The varieties Roseau and Nueltin have increased natural tolerance to the herbicide Roundup. New releases, Steadfast, a rhizomatous birdsfoot trefoil from Missouri and Pardee, from Cornell, were significantly lower yielding than other varieties in the trial and may not be winterhardy enough to be grown in Minnesota.

Winterhardy varieties, such as Norcen, generally produce the highest consistent

overall yields. Norcen, released in 1983 by the agricultural experiment stations of Minnesota and six other states, has performed exceptionally well in grazing trials.

Birdsfoot Trefoil Planting Rate and Date

Bushel Weight, Pounds	65
Seeds/Pound.....	372,000
Planting Rate, Pounds/Acre	
Alone	8
In Mixtures.....	6
Planting Rate, Seeds Sq.Ft.	
Alone	70
In Mixtures.....	50
Planting Date.....	Early Spring or Summer

Dry-matter yield, in tons dry matter per acre, of birdsfoot trefoil varieties seeded at two locations.

Variety	Seedlot	Winter Injury*		Rosemount			Grand Rapids	
		5/24/04	1998	1999-01	2002	2004	1999-01	2002-04
Bright	3150	—	3.6	3.1	—	—	—	—
Dawn	3142	1.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	5.3	4.8	2.1
Empire	2947	—	4.0	—	—	—	4.4	—
Fergus	3149	—	3.9	—	—	—	—	—
Georgia 1	3143	—	---	3.6	—	—	4.6	1.8
Leo	2951	—	3.9	3.1	—	—	—	—
Norcen	3173	1.0	4.3	3.5	3.9	5.3	4.8	2.1
Nueltin	3370	1.0	3.7	3.1	4.0	4.8	4.2	2.2
Pardee	3422	8.3	—	—	3.5	0.5	—	1.9
Roseau	3435	2.5	4.1	3.4	4.1	4.4	4.6	2.1
Steadfast	3065	—	3.1	2.7	—	—	3.5	—
Trevig	3414	—	4.1	—	4.2	—	—	—
Viking	3395	1.8	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.9	4.4	2.1
WITT	2846	—	4	3.2	4.1	—	—	2.0
LSD 5%		0.9	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2

* Winter injury, 1 = no injury; 9 = dead