

# Tripoli

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## The white clover for the South

*Trifolium repens*

### White clover

White clover (*trifolium repens*) is one of the most important pasture legumes in the temperate zones of the world. New Zealand leads the world in the development and production of this wonderful perennial forage. It is used in numerous countries as the base of a good pasture. New Zealand, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and Germany are just a few examples of countries where white clover is very popular among farmers.

White clover produces high quality forage, not only because the clover plants produce high quality forage, but also because the grass that grows with the clover will benefit from the nitrogen fixation by the clover.

### White clover in the Southern parts of the United States

The Southern part of the U.S. has a need for a good perennial legume that will supply nitrogen for pasture systems. Tripoli white clover has proven to be a clover that can withstand even the most severe summers. Most Tripoli white clover pastures have survived both the summers of 1997 and 1998. The latter is commonly known as one of the hottest and driest summers in the history.

### Nitrogen Fixation

As mentioned, white clover has the ability to capture nitrogen and put it in the pasture system. It does that by means of its symbiotic relationship with rhizobia bacteria. These bacteria fix atmospheric nitrogen and release it to the clover plant. This way clover puts nitrogen in the pasture system without anyone having to pay for it. It is estimated that a good white clover stand can fix as much as 125 pounds of nitrogen per acre per year.

### Tripoli white clover and wildlife food plots

Tripoli is very well respected as the legume of choice for wildlife food plots. Its persistence has made a lot of fans among people who like to plant perennial food plots.

Without a doubt, one of the most appealing fields is the Jackson Bienville project in North Louisiana. Tripoli has been planted in a mix with Chicory and Matua brome. And although the climate has been rough during the past years, the Tripoli, Chicory and Matua have managed to survive and are looking better than ever. The Barenbrug wildlife catalog tells more about this interesting project.

Adding Tripoli to a food plot mixture will do a few things. White clover is very palatable and nutritious to a lot of big game. It also attracts bugs, which attract birds like Turkey and Quail. But even more important, the white clover will supply nitrogen to the other plants of the food plot. This way less work and money has to be spent to fertilize the food plot.

### Planting and management

Tripoli white clover can be planted in the fall, at least 8 weeks before killing frosts. When planted in a mix, 3 pounds to the acre is sufficient.

White clover does well on most soil types, however the pH of the soil is rather important. The pH should be at least 6.0 while the optimum is 7.0. For optimum results a soil sample should be taken and fertilization can be applied accordingly.

Always use inoculated seed. Since not all soil types have the right micro-bacteria, they should be put on the seed prior to planting.

Once established, sunlight is a critical factor for white clover. If grass or other components of the mix tend to overshadow the clover, the field should be cut or grazed to allow sunlight to reach the clover plants.