



A steady demand now exists for certified Montgomery red clover seed. This article discusses the production of this seed, and describes

Production of Seed In Suitable Areas

the requirements and management necessary for success. It is emphasised, however, that practices vary considerably, not only from district to district, but also within districts.

FOR seventy years or more broad red clover (or cowgrass as it is often called) has played an important part in New Zealand pastures. Certain districts have specialised in the production of this seed, which has earned a high reputation overseas because of its consistently good quality.

It is, however, only in comparatively recent years that Montgomeryshire extra late flowering red clover (to give it its full and descriptive name) has come into use in this country. Critical experimental work on this strain was begun in New Zealand as recently as 1926, and it was not until 1929 that Montgomery red clover (as it is now usually called) was regarded as having proved its worth sufficiently to warrant its widespread use for grazing, haying, and seed production. Certification of this seed was started in the 1931-32 season, and as soon as the value of the type was recognised by the farming community a steadily increasing demand for its seed set in. The imported seed was usually high in price, and sometimes of indifferent quality.

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It is not surprising, therefore, that the production of Montgomery red clover seed for our own farming requirements began to interest farmers in those districts which had in the past been regarded as producers of good quality red clover seed. And it is these districts, with certain exceptions, that are now the main producers of Montgomery red clover seed.

Description

Montgomery red clover is a long-lived and leafy type with a dense, low crown. Growth begins rather late in the spring, and carries on well into the autumn. As its name (extra late flowering) implies, it flowers much later in the season than broad red clover. From the seed producers'

point of view, its extreme leafiness and lateness in flowering are points that should be fully appreciated in order that successful results may be achieved.

Districts Suitable For Seed Production

Before entering on Montgomery red clover seed production farmers should make sure that their district is suitable for this purpose. As Montgomery red clover flowers late in the season and consequently ripens late, it should be realised that districts which usually experience a wet, late autumn are unsuitable. One of the chief requirements for any seed production is good harvest weather. Because of the lateness of the harvest and the bulk of leaf to be handled, this is of special importance with regard to Montgomery red clover.

The following table shows the number of paddocks and acreage of Montgomery red clover entered for seed certification in the 1940-41 season:—