

Sainfoin VNS

Key Features

Sainfoin is a deep-rooted perennial legume arising from a branching root crown. Flowers are showy and pink, white or purple and tightly arranged in a compact raceme with 20 to 50 flowers per head. Sainfoin typically grows taller than alfalfa reaching 8 to 36 inches tall. The seeding unit is a single-seeded pod. Seeds are large with only 18,500 (pre-husked) seeds per pound.

Sainfoin is an introduced non-bloat causing legume which can be used as hay, or grazed in pastures alone or in a grass-legume mix. It is commonly mixed with Meadow Brome and Birdsfoot Trefoil and/or Orchardgrass. Sainfoin is highly palatable to sheep and cattle and is preferred over alfalfa. First cut hay yields are often greater than those for alfalfa but regrowth is poor. It is recommended to be cut once/season at the half- to full-bloom stage.

Sainfoin blossoms produce copious amounts of nectar and are highly attractive to pollinating insects, particularly honey bees in May through July. Honey made from Sainfoin is reported to be of the finest quality.

Application

Hay
Grazing

Planting Time

Spring & Fall

Establishment

Sainfoin seed is quite large but must not be seeded deeper than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. The seed takes up moisture rapidly and germinates quickly. Seed must be inoculated with the appropriate rhizobium and planted into a firm, well-packed seedbed. Seed should be planted in the spring for best emergence.

Management Keys

Do not graze for two seasons after planting. Stands should be allowed to naturally reseed every 2 to 3 years for reestablishment. Sainfoin is subject to crown rot and the stands may not persist more than 5-6 years in areas subject to heavy infection.

Sainfoin is well suited to hay harvesting as it grows upright and is easily cut. Although it is somewhat higher in moisture content than alfalfa, it does not present the problems in curing that red clover and alsike clover do.

Since regrowth is very poor, it is best suited to taking one clipping at about the half- to full-bloom stage.



Seeding Rate

Drilled	40-50#
Precision Planting	30-40#
Broadcast	50-70#

Seeding Depth

Plant no deeper than $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Characteristics

Forage Yield	5
Forage Quality	5
Early Spring Growth	5
Regrowth	2

Scale 1-5 (1=Poor, 5=Excellent)

