

NATIVE PERENNIALS

Prairie Clover, Purple 'Bismarck'

Dalea purpurea 'Bismarck'

Native. NRCS selection from Lyman County, SD. Fine-leaved legume with purple flowers at the ends of terminal spikes. Used by native pollinators and butterflies.

Good landscape appeal. Needs good drainage. 1-3 feet tall.

Description: This attractive perennial grows from a much branched woody crown and reaches heights of 1 to 3 feet. Multiple stems give a bushy appearance and support odd-pinnate leaves with 5, or 3 or 7, linear, glandular-dotted leaflets. Small purple flowers are crowded into dense, cylindrical spikes up to 2 inches long. Purple prairie clover has narrower, smaller leaflets than white prairie clover.

Distribution, habitat: Purple prairie clover is the most common prairie clover in our area. The different varieties are found in southern Alberta and Manitoba and widely dispersed in the Great Plains to northern Texas. In the northern Great Plains, purple prairie clover is infrequent to common on rocky plains and hillsides, open wooded areas, and valleys. It is less common in drier western areas.

Comments: The forage characteristics and values of white prairie clover hold for purple prairie clover. Additionally, because it is more abundant, it is sometimes an important component of prairie hay. Seed is readily available for prairie restoration and reclamation.

Credit: James E. Johnson & Gary E. Larson, Grassland Plants of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains. SDSU, Brookings, SD. B-566 (rev.) August 1999. Page 180.

Photo Credit: Big Sioux Nursery, In., Watertown, SD

