

DAWN ALSIKE CLOVER

Dawn alsike clover (Trifolium hybridum L.) has been licensed for sale in Canada by the Agriculture Canada's Plant Products Division.

Dawn was developed by Dr. C.R. Elliott, Agriculture Canada research station at Beaverlodge, Alberta.

It is a nine-clone synthetic variety of diploid alsike clover. Original single-plant selections were made in 1960 from regional strains compiled in 1955 for the Aurora alsike clover breeding program.

Main selection criteria were winter-hardiness and herbage yields. Freedom from disease (Phyllody), upright growth, uniformity in flowering and maturity and yield of seed were also considered.

Of the nine clones, five came from strains used in Aurora (one from Westlock, Alberta, and two each from Hinton, Trail and Debolt, Alberta), one from Regional Strain 11 (selected at Prince George, B.C.), and three from the variety Alon.

Dawn is a typical diploid alsike clover with all markings common to the species. Compared to the variety Aurora, Dawn has proven to be superior in winter-hardiness and herbage production at Beaverlodge and Lacombe, Alberta; La Pocatiere, Quebec; and Thunder Bay,

Ontario. It is a superior seed yielder at Beaverlodge, the only station where seed yield data were collected. At Charlottetown it produced excellent first-year yields although it was one of the shorter growing types. Regrowth following cutting was superior to all other entries. At Thunder Bay it showed some resistance to virus mosaic and was equal, or superior, to other test entries in regrowth. Individual plants tend to be more upright than for the variety Aurora.

Dawn was outyielded by the variety Tetra (a tetraploid), at La Pocatiere, Quebec; Fredericton, N.B.; and Truro, N.S.

Dawn should be useful in all provinces in Canada where alsike clover is recommended in special purpose herbage mixtures for areas plagued with excessive acidity, alkalinity, spring flooding or high water table. It will be particularly useful in the northern part of Alberta and British Columbia where the species is proving very suitable for developing community pastures in semi-wooded areas and as the small-seeded legume component in mixtures for ecological repair. It is intended to replace the landrace variety Aurora because of superior performance and an assured source of reliable genetic stock.

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