

Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

B. Legumes

1. Clover

Trifolium fragiferum L. (strawberry clover) cv. Shearmans

Reg. No. B-1c-3

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Origin

Derived from a single naturally occurring plant observed by Mr. J.H. Shearman, near Fullerton via Newcastle, N.S.W., in 1897. This plant was multiplied by runners by Mr. Shearman who established a 12-acre paddock of it. It proved much more productive than ordinary strawberry clover.

Morphological description (5)

Growth habit is coarse and lax and leaflet size large like cv. Palestine which it closely resembles. The leaflets, however, are free of hairs on the under surface and the flower heads are rather more inflated. The pods are medium-sized compared with the small pods of cv. Palestine. Breakwell (1) states that the leaves in the young stages are marked by dots irregularly distributed over the surface.

Agronomic characters

Comparable to other varieties of the species in resistance to salinity and flooding. Its original area of development was on the marshy and slightly saline soils near Fullerton Cove. Flowering is early and winter and spring production are high as in cv. Palestine (5). The early description in New South Wales (1) reports that the flower heads do not become inflated and seed set is very poor and propagation is entirely by runners. Donald (3) and Tiver (5) report that the flower heads become more inflated than in Palestine and that quite normal seed set occurs in South Australia. Donald believed the species to be self pollinated but the species was later shown to be predominantly cross fertilized (4). Carpenter (2) offers the explanation that the low seed set in New South Wales was probably due to the self-incompatibility within the single clone multiplied by Shearman. A very small amount of cross pollination between cultivars in South Australia, in commercial or experimental areas would rapidly lead to a build up of seed production potential, through the introduction of cross-compatibility alleles and natural selection on seed production.

References

1. Breakwell, E. (1923). *"The Grasses and Fodder Plants of N.S.W."* (Govt. Printer, Sydney.)
2. Carpenter, J.A. (1971). Personal communication. Tasm. Dep. Agric. Launceston.
3. Donald, C.M. (1936). Strain variation in strawberry clover (*Trifolium fragiferum* L.) and prairie grass (*Bromus unioloides* H.B et K). *J. Aust. Inst. Agric. Sci.* **2**, 122-3.
4. Morely, F.H.W. (1963). Mode of pollination in strawberry clover. *Aust. J. Exp. Agric. Anim Husb.* **3**, 5-8.
5. Tiver, N.S. (1954). Strawberry clover. *J. Dep. Agric. S. Aust.* **57**, 317-25.