

Red Clover

Trifolium pratense

Plants · In flower May-Sep



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A perennial of grassland with trefoil leaves usually marked with a pale crescent, and dense rounded heads of pinkish-purple pea flowers set directly above a pair of leaves. Red clover is common on verges, meadows, rough grassland and old leys around Dumfries, and is also grown as a fodder and green manure crop.

BEHAVIOUR

The florets are long-tubed, so honey bees and short-tongued bumblebees mostly cannot reach the nectar — pollination depends heavily on long-tongued bumblebees such as the garden bumblebee and common carder. When red clover was exported to New Zealand it set no seed at all until bumblebees were imported too. Like all clovers it fixes nitrogen and enriches the soil.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Peas (Fabaceae)
HEIGHT	20-60 cm
STATUS	Native; common, and widely sown as fodder

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