



# NRCS Species for Plant Collections

*Dalea purpurea*

**Scientific Name:** *Dalea purpurea*  
**Vent.**

**Common Name:**  
Purple prairie clover

### **Morphological Characteristics:**

**Habit-** Purple prairie clover is a native, warm season, perennial legume that grows 1 to 3 feet tall. It reproduces from seed and parent plants regrow from a thick taproot with a woody base each year.

**Leaves-** The pinnately compound leaves are 0.4 to 1.6 inches long, divided into three to seven narrow segments and arranged alternately on the stem

**Seed head** – Small purple flowers surround a terminal spike. The first flowers bloom at the bottom and then the circle of flowers move upward on the spike as new buds open. The spike is eventually covered with small pods each containing a small yellowish-green to brown seed.

**Habitat and Range-** Purple prairie clover is found on sites with clay loam to loamy sand soils. This plant is usually found growing in association with native warm season grasses.

### **Conservation Use:**

Why collect this plant? Texas Plant Materials Centers have identified this plant as having potential benefits to the following conservation practice standards: 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management, 342 Critical Area Planting, 647 Early Successional Habitat Development Management, 340 Cover crop, 550 Range Planting and 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting. Your assistance in collecting this plant helps support the NRCS conservation practice standards which are employed daily to conserve the natural resources of Texas!



Purple prairie Clover in bloom, photo courtesy of Alan Shadow USDA/NRCS East Texas Plant Materials Center



Prairie clover seed,  
Photo courtesy Shelly Maher-  
USDA/NRCS Kika de la Garza PMC

**Center Requesting Seed:** East Texas Plant Materials Center

## How to Collect Seed

1. Identify native plant stands in your area. You can go to the following websites for helpful photos <http://www.plants.usda.gov> , <http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html> or [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)
2. Determine if seed is mature. The cone shaped center should be brown.
3. Collect the cone shaped center and deposit them in a brown paper sack. Collect seed cones from a minimum of 30 to 50 plants.
4. Label each collection as it is made so collections do not get mixed up. Information required includes: Collector's name, number of plants collected, location (parish, city, highway, GPS coordinates), site description (soil type, slope, and plants growing in association).
5. Complete NRCS-ECS-580; Plant Collection Information Form and mail with collected seeds to the NRCS Plant Materials Center requesting the species.

East Texas Plant Materials Center  
6598 FM 2782  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964

Physical Location: SFA Experimental Forest

## Helpful Tips

Look for superior plants that display differences in color, height, or foliage abundance and record observations. Differences in growing site or location should be made into separate collections if they are separated by more than 1 mile between sites.

## Other Photos:



Alan Shadow - USDA/NRCS East Texas PMC



Alan Shadow-USDA/NRCS East Texas PMC

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