

PRESS BULLETIN NO. 7.

Michigan Experiment Station, January 15, 1895.

ALSIKE CLOVER.

From present indications the amount of Alsike clover sown in Michigan the coming spring will be very large. This species is receiving attention mainly on account of the recent failures of red clover, owing to dry weather and the attacks of insects, particularly the imported clover root-borer.

For most purposes Alsike is inferior to either early or mammoth clover and it has not become generally popular at the East and in England where it has long been known. It does not yield so much, either of hay or pasture, as those kinds, and will not stand drouth as well. It is, however, more hardy against cold than other clovers, and is especially adapted to low or heavy lands where red clover winter-kills. When restricted to such locations it has given general satisfaction, but much disappointment has resulted in dry seasons from sowing it on sandy uplands. Alsike serves well on low land to mix with timothy, and such a mixture is excellent for horses, since Alsike hay, if properly cured, is brighter and freer from dust than that of the ordinary clovers. On heavy or uneven soil, a little Alsike seed may well be mixed with that of red clover to improve the stand. The seed being very small, not more than half the usual quantity is required per acre.

At present Alsike is a profitable crop to grow for seed. It yields more seed per acre than common red clover, and will generally produce a crop of seed when that of red clover fails on account of the root-borer. It is able to do this, not by reason of exemption from the attacks of the borer, but because of its seeding on the first crop, before the insects have had time to destroy the plants. Alsike shells very easily when ripe, and should be cut for seed as soon as a majority of the heads have begun to turn brown. In most cases sufficient seed will shell out to reseed the field spontaneously. Alsike straw, after the seed is threshed, makes good fodder.