

Crown vetch

Securigera varia

Description

Used as ground cover and for erosion control; green fertilizer crop.

Habit

Forms large clumps of creeping stems 6 ft long. Rhizomes can grow up to 10 ft long which allow the plant to spread rapidly. May fully cover 70-100 sq ft within a 4 year period.

Leaves

Compound, consists of 15-25 pairs of oblong leaflets and a terminal leaflet. 0.75 in (1.9 cm) long.

Stems

Creeping, forms large clumps, grows up to 6 ft long.

Flowers

Pea-like in shape, pinkish in color, clustered in umbels on long stalks, resembles large clover flower; blooms from May through August.





Fruits and Seeds

Flowers develop into narrow, flattened pods.

Seeds are reported to be poisonous.

Habitat

Native to Europe, Southwest Asia and Northern Africa. Found along roadsides, in right-of-ways, open fields, gravel bars and along streams.

Reproduction

Spreads both vegetatively through rhizomes and through the dispersal of seeds.

Similar

Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) produces similar umbels of flowers, however they are bright yellow or yellow-orange in color and their leaves are trifoliate.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Pulling out the entire plant and mowing, prescribed burning may be effective against seedlings or in slowing the spread. Effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate, triclopyr, or clopyralid.

Credits

The information provided in this factsheet was gathered from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Individual species images that appear with a number in a black box are courtesy of the Bugwood.org network (<http://www.invasive.org>). Individual photo author credits may not be included due to the small display size of the images and subsequent difficulty of reading the provided text. All other images appear courtesy of Google (<http://images.google.com>).