

ROUNDHEAD LESPEDEZA

***Lespedeza capitata* Michx.**
plant symbol = LECA8

Contributed By: USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center



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Alternate Names

roundheaded bush clover, bushclover

Uses

Ethnobotanic: The Omaha and Ponca used the stems for a moxa to treat cases of neuralgia and rheumatism. The Comanche boiled the leaves for a beverage tea. The Meskwaki used the root as an antidote for poison. The Iroquois used the whole plant of *Lespedeza* (unidentified to species level) in combination with *Euonymus obovata* for stricture caused by something wrong with the blood.

Wildlife: Roundhead lespedeza seeds are an important food source for the bobwhite quail.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Bean Family (Fabaceae). This herbaceous, native, perennial has erect stems that are 6-15 dm, and simple and branched above. The petioles are 2-5 mm, shorter than the stalk of the terminal leaflet. The plant has numerous small trifoliate leaves. The leaflets are 4.5 x 1.8 cm, variable in shape and pubescence. The flowers are ochroleucous and are arranged in spikes or heads. The calyx lobes are all separate and the wings exceed the keel. Each flower is subtended at the base by small bractlets. The fruits are indehiscent, and 1-seeded.

Distribution

For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site. This plant is found in dry, open woods, sand dunes, and prairies. It ranges from Maine and southern Quebec to Minnesota and South Dakota, south to Georgia, west Florida, and Texas.

Establishment

Propagation by seeds: Clean the seed and scarify each seed coat with sandpaper. If you are storing the seeds before planting, put them in cold storage. Plant the seeds in a bedding mix with a light layer of vermiculite on top. Sow the seeds in flats and water them, keeping them moist. Do not over water them. The seeds will germinate in approximately two weeks. After two more weeks, the seedlings will be ready to transplant into plugs. These plants can be transplanted once again in several weeks to larger pots. In the middle of May, after the danger of frost has past, the plugs can be directly transplanted into a well-drained soil in full sunlight and watered. Make sure the plants are moist for several weeks until established.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

LECA8 is available through selected native plant nurseries within its range. Please check the Vendor Database, expected to be on-line through the

PLANTS Web site in 2001 by clicking on Plant Materials.

References

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Prepared By & Species Coordinator

M. Kat Anderson

USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center
c/o Department of Environmental Horticulture,
University of California, Davis, California

Edited 05dec00 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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