Spring tillage reduced reseeding of Paradana balansa (Palisot de Beauvois) and the Heliothine complex of corn earworm (Helicoverpa zea (Boddie)) and tobacco budworm (Heliothis virescens (F.)). In the Mississippi Delta, tarnished plant bug overwinters as adults. The earliest F1 nymphs appear on host plants during mid-March. Bollworm and budworm over winter as pupae, and F1 larvae begin appearing in mid-April. For the earliest heliothine pest (bollworm), termination of cover crops prior to 10 May prevents pupation of the F1 generation. Paradana balansa clover makes hard seed prior to this date.

Balansa Clover: A Reseeding Legume Cover Crop for No-Till Systems


Rational: Adapted reseeding legume cover crops can reduce erosion, suppress weeds and contribute N at low cost in the Southeastern U.S. Early maturity is needed to avoid delaying main crop planting and to avoid development of insect pests. Hard seed may allow volunteer cover crop regeneration for several years from a single seed crop, increasing cropping system flexibility and robustness.

Seed of several cultivars is commercially available from Australia. ‘Paradana’ was released in 1986. It was derived from Turkmen introductions crossed and tested at Kangaroo Island, NSW, Australia. Ungrown, it grows up to 1 m high and produces a yellow brome that is palatable and of good feed value. It becomes more prostrate and lower in years. Seeds yield over 600 kg/ha have been obtained. Established stands are tolerant of waterlogging, moderate salinity, and soil pH from 4.5 to 8.0.

Balansa clover bloomed (right) bloomed earlier than crimson clover in Tiptonville, TN (zone 6b) after a mild winter.

Balansa clover was named *Trifolium michelianum* Seft 1798 (from previous name *Trifolium balansae* Boiss.) to Trifolium Balansae Boiss., or *Trifolium balansae* L. in the works of Robert Fonten.). A landrace of balansa clover collected in Turkey in 1957 (27.77 N 28.10 E) was released in 1965 by the Alabama office of NRCS with the name Mike. Small amounts of seed of this accession are available from the PI station in Athens, GA.

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Balansa clover seed is produced commercially in Australia. Improved Paradana seed sells for about $2.50/kg in the U.S., coated or uncoated.

Balansa clover bloomed following corn harvest in the Mississippi Delta (Anderson farm, zone 8a) at full bloom in early April 1999. Growth was terminated May 13, 1999 and soybean was planted.

Because of the small seed size (from 1000 to 1400 per gram), only 5 kg/ha gives a dense stand. We plant 5 kg/ha of plain or 8 kg/ha coated seed. Ideal planting depth is 7 to 10 mm. Good stands have been obtained by broadcasting seed into low residue crops like cotton. Heavy residue may inhibit establishment.

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