



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

'Lancer'

Perennial Pea

Lathyrus latifolius L.

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center



'Lancer' Perennial Pea

'Lancer' Perennial Pea was released by the USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center and the Michigan Department of Transportation in 1986.

Description

'Lancer' has compound leaves with two lanceolate leaflets that are 1.5 to 3.5 inches long. The long, broadly winged stems have tendrils that give it climbing ability. The green stems and foliage form a thick vine mat that measures 2 to 3 feet in height. The plants bloom continuously for 6 weeks during the summer. The flowers range from white to deep purple and are borne on racemes of up to 10 blossoms each. The seeds are large and are produced in pods that are 2.5 to 3.5 inches long.

Compared to other varieties of perennial pea, 'Lancer' grows more upright, has superior seedling vigor, and is a good seed producer. It also has a more uniform distribution of colors than other perennial peas evaluated.

Conservation Uses

The conservation use of 'Lancer' perennial pea is for inclusion in roadside seeding mixtures and in other critical area plantings where the objective includes beautification. 'Lancer' perennial pea is compatible with other legumes and fixes nitrogen, which increases ground cover density in erosion control plantings. It also has a secondary value as wildlife food and cover, particularly for small mammals. It is also known to be utilized for food by pheasant and quail.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

'Lancer' should be established as part of a seed mixture that includes perennial grasses, other legumes, or both. Other components of the mixture may be the principal soil-stabilizing plants, and 'Lancer' can be included to provide color, or it can be one of the principal cover plants. If included in the mixture to provide color only, the recommended seeding rate of 'Lancer' is 10 pounds per acre; otherwise it is 15 pounds per acre. Do not seed alone because 'Lancer' will not provide soil cover quickly. 'Lancer' can be direct seeded with standard planting techniques. If the seed is drilled, it should be placed in a firm seedbed that is 0.5 to 1 inch deep. The planting site should be rolled or cultivated before and after seeding. If the site is unsuitable for equipment use, the seed can be applied with special hydro seeding equipment or broadcast and raked in the soil by hand. All plantings should be mulched with 1.5 to 2 tons of straw per acre.

'Lancer' can be planted in early spring or in the fall before September 15th. Fertilizer and lime should be applied according to needs determined by a soil test. The fertility requirement for 'Lancer' is similar to those for other legumes, such as alfalfa. Seed should be inoculated with the proper nitrogen-fixing bacteria just before planting.



A field of 'Lancer' Perennial Pea

Ecological Considerations

Downy mildew has been observed on the leaves of 'Lancer' perennial pea, but overall it is not susceptible to any serious diseases or insect problems.



'Lancer' Perennial Pea in bloom

Seed and Plant Production

'Lancer' perennial pea produces seed annually. Flowering starts in mid-July and can continue until frost. The long flowering period results in seeds of various maturity in the field at the same time.

Seeds can be harvested using a combine harvester. Careful timing is necessary to obtain maximum yield when harvesting seed because seed pods shatter when fully ripe. Plants should be dry as possible when mechanically harvested. A plant dessicant may be helpful to aid plant dry down. Seed yields average 165 pounds pr. acre.

Availability

The Natural Resources Conservation Service maintains G2, equivalent to foundation seed, at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center.



Closeup photo of 'Lancer' Perennial Pea seed

For more information, contact:
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Citation Release Brochure for 'Lancer' Perennial Pea, *Lathyrus latifolius* L, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center, East Lansing, MI 48823 . Published *June, 1984*, Revised *January, 2012*.

For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov/>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>



Field of 'Lancer' Perennial Pea in bloom

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