

Small Burnet

Sanguisorba minor Scop.

Brandon Carr, Soil Conservationist



1Joe F. Duft @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA NRCS. 1992. Western wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species. West Region, Sacramento.

Small burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) is a relatively long-lived, evergreen, introduced perennial forb. This species is native to Eurasia and has been cultivated in Europe for many years. The only current release, 'Delar', comes from the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center in Idaho. While the origin of 'Delar' is unknown, the parent material can be traced back to a seed purchase in 1957 from a private seed company in Paducah, Kentucky. In Texas, only small populations can be found. These plantings have resulted from direct sowing of seed by landowners. Small burnet is not listed on the USDA/NRCS Plants Database as being distributed in Texas. In most cases, farmers and landowners have obtained seed from other states and brought it to Texas to plant. The James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, TX obtained a sample of seed which is growing in a rod row at the center. It appears to be hardy enough to withstand the hot dry conditions of the area, but at this time, no further testing is being conducted. Certified seed is readily available through commercial seed produces and breeder seed is maintained by the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center.

Small burnet has significant conservation benefits. It is considered very desirable as forage for elk, deer, antelope, and birds. The evergreen leaves provide good to excellent forage value for both livestock and wildlife. It can be added to seed mixes for pastures as well as food plots. The seed provides food for many different species of game and song birds. Small burnet also provides cover for small mammals and birds. The flowers of small burnet attract different species of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Small burnet will grow to a height between 6-25 inches depending on the amount of rainfall. A thick base of stems erect from a prominent taproot. Plants have pinnately compound leaves with 9-17 coarsely serrate leaflets. The leaves grow up to 4 inches long and have an oval to oblong shape. The flowers have a red to purplish color and grow 3-8 inches long. Flowers are imperfect with the male on the lower portion, and the female on the upper part. The female portion of the flower has no petals and about 12 stamens. The seed of small burnet is oblong, about 4-5 mm in length, and has a woody or warty appearance.

Small burnet prefers open, full sun areas, but will tolerate minor semi-shaded conditions. It grows best on well drained soils that receive at least 14 inches of rainfall. Small burnet is a hardy plant that can survive cold winters and severe droughts. It provides excellent diversity to seeded plant communities.



2Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/bio/docs/reverchon%20V5.pdf>

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