

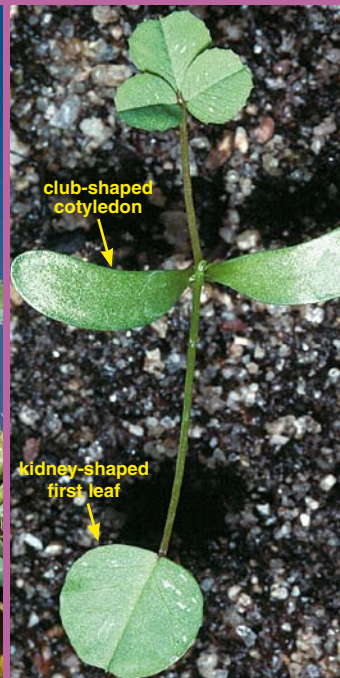
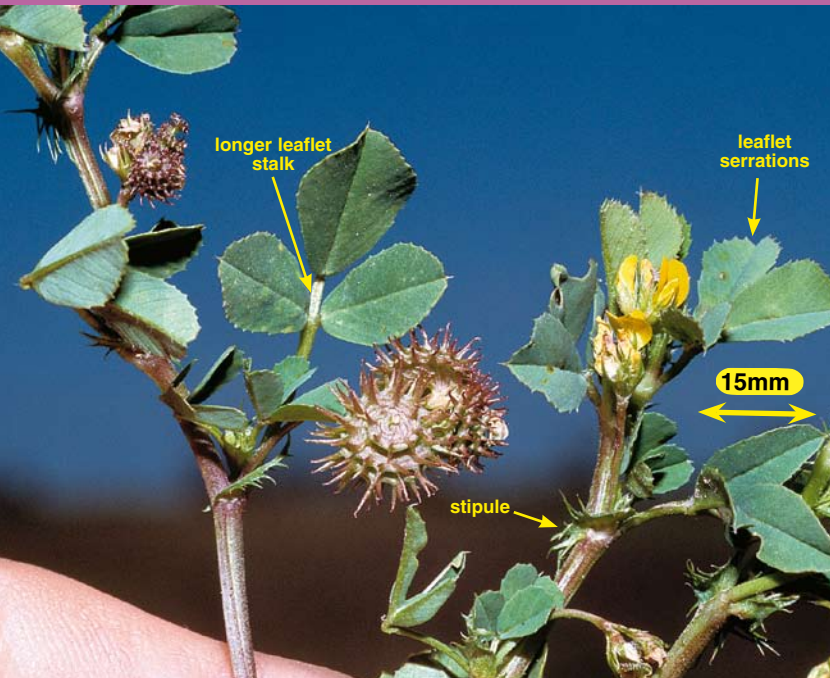
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SALTdeck

BURR MEDIC

Medicago polymorpha

L3
LEGUME





Family: Fabaceae.

Description: A variable species sometimes split into three varieties based on the number of coils and spines on the burrs. Burr Medic is a low-growing, spreading annual, with erect stems and alternate trifoliolate (3-leaflet) leaves. Leaflets obovate (egg-shaped and broadest above the middle) with small serrations on the upper half (see photo). Stipules large and torn (see photo). Flowers yellow. Seeds light yellow to brownish, in a cylindrical coil. Flowers spring to summer. Two varieties are easily recognisable: Spiny Burr Medic *Medicago polymorpha* var. *polymorpha* (see photo) and Spineless Burr Medic *Medicago polymorpha* var. *brevispina*, distinguished by a lack of spines on the burrs.

Key features: Central leaflet with longer leaf stalk (see photo). Barrel-shaped seed pod with or without spines (see photo), with 1.5–7 coils; green at first maturing ash-grey to black.

Value: Provides early feed and can be used for dryland grazing and hay production. More productive and persistent in low rainfall areas than subclover.

Salinity and waterlogging tolerance: The most water tolerant annual medic with some tolerance to salinity.

Notes: Native of Mediterranean region, now spread all over the world. A variable species that now constitutes a valuable part of pasture stands in Australia, USA and South America. Grows well in heavy textured soils. Will not tolerate soils with pH less than 5.2.

References: *Pasture Legumes for Temperate Farming Systems (Ute Guide)*, Primary Industries and Resources South Australia, 2004. *Genus Medicago (Leguminosae)*, Lesins and Lesins, 1979. *Flora of Victoria*, Walsh and Entwisle (eds), Vol. 3, 1996.

