

Cholderton Mix

A Good, Traditional, All-Round Ley

Cholderton Mix Four Year Plus

Grazing/Cutting Ley

Ref. MIXCM

A ley which provides good growth for early grazing or cutting. It regrows powerfully through the spring and into the summer giving an outstanding second cut yield. The ley tolerates dry conditions due to the deep roots of cocksfoot and red clover. The mixture will last for between three and five years. If left in the ground for longer the cocksfoot will become dominant.

1.50 kg certified ABERECHO tet. hybrid ryegrass
2.20 kg certified CORBET perennial ryegrass
4.00 kg certified DUNLUCE tet. perennial ryegrass
2.00 kg certified PROMESSE timothy
2.00 kg certified SPARTA cocksfoot
0.50 kg certified GLOBAL red clover
0.40 kg certified ABERHEARLD white clover
0.30 kg certified ABERPEARL white clover
0.10 kg certified S184 wild white clover

14.00 kg per acre £42.47 (32.5 kg/ha £106.18)

Henry Edmunds and his Mixture

The Cholderton Estate is a traditionally run, mixed farm near Salisbury, Hampshire. Henry Edmunds has been running the 2,500 acre estate since 1975. He is a keen naturalist and an advocate of the rotational ley farming system which has been central to Henrys farming policy to provide for his dairy, beef and sheep enterprises.

Henrys great grandfather, a scientist, was originally attracted to the low quality land at Cholderton as he was keen to apply a scientific approach to prove that even poor land could be farmed successfully. The thin, chalk soils at Cholderton hold little organic material and require regular applications of manure and careful management to keep in good heart.

The Cholderton seed mixture contains hybrid and perennial ryegrasses along with early growing cocksfoot and late season timothy. These grasses mixed with red and white clovers are left down for around five years before being ploughed and reverted to arable for two or three years. In addition to providing forage the leys also improve soil structure and fertility and suppress weeds.

On the thinnest chalk soils Sainfoin is grown to finish lambs in the summer and also to provide hay. Vetches and lucerne are also important crops providing both forage and soil fertility at Cholderton.

A Proven Combination

The main reason for sowing mixtures of grasses and clovers together is to increase yield. A single grass alone will nearly always be lower yielding and vulnerable to failure due to pest or disease attack or the effects of unusual seasonal weather. Therefore, a mixture of seeds is preferred over single grass sowings especially for leys which are expected to last for more than one year.

Really high yields from mixtures of grasses and clovers are due to better seasonal distribution of growth; grasses give high yields during May and June; clovers produce theirs in July. Equally as important is that a combination of grass and clover provides the optimum balance between bulk yield and feed value. Grasses tend to have higher annual yields but are lower in protein than clovers. Animals grow faster and do better on a mix of clover and grass.

Sensible Approach

There are many grasses and legumes which can be found throughout the UK but there are only a handful of species which are used for forage. The reason for this is simple. A suitable forage plant must produce a reasonable yield and be nutritious to livestock. The list of suitable plants is short. Ryegrasses, cocksfoot, timothy along with red and white clover are the most notable. These species can be reliably sown together and are quite easy to manage as a temporary ley.

The mixture on this page is a good all rounder and a good choice for those in traditional mixed farming areas.