

# BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL

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*Lotus corniculatus (Leguminosae)*

## Fast Facts:

Number of Growers: 0
Per Acre Value: \$600 - \$800
Acres in Washington: N/A
Value of Production in Washington: N/A

## Description

### Of crop:

Birdsfoot Trefoil is a common flowering plant native to grasslands of temperate Eurasia and North Africa. It is a perennial herbaceous plant, similar in appearance to some clovers. The flowers develop into small pea-like pods or legumes. The name 'bird's foot' refers to the appearance of the seed pods on their stalk. There are five leaflets, but with the central three held conspicuously above the others, hence the use of the name *trefoil*. The height of the plant is variable, from 5-20 cm, occasionally more where supported by other plants; the stems can reach up to 50 cm long. It is typically sprawling at the height of the surrounding grassland. It can survive fairly close grazing, trampling and mowing. It is most often found in sandy soils. Trends in the area are down. With commodity prices on the rise, there is little or no potential for growth in the area.

### Key pests:

Insect pests to trefoil consist of aphids and grasshoppers during the growing season. Lambsquarter and nightshade compose the two most common weed pests associated with birdsfoot trefoil production.

### Key pesticides:

Weed pests are controlled with MCPA and 2,4-DB.

### Critical pest

#### Control issues:

Broadleaf weed control remains the largest pest control issue. Growers find it difficult to separate the weed seed from the trefoil seed. Currently, there are no labeled residual herbicides for birdsfoot trefoil. Another problem that growers face is when to harvest trefoil. This is difficult to determine since the crop doesn't flower uniformly and as a result seed shatter is a problem. The use of chemical desiccants could help offset this problem.

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**Pics:**

