

BUTTERFLY PEA

Kordofan Pea, Blue Pea, Asian Pigeon Wings

Clitoria ternatea

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Clitoria ternatea is a climbing, vining, tropical legume. Leaves are pinnately compound, each bearing 5-7 leaflets. Flowers occur in singles or pairs, are 4 cm wide, and are colored deep blue or solid white. These give way to pubescent, flat pods, that, upon maturation, dehisce (split and burst open) violently, dispersing seed widely.

Uses

C. ternatea is a highly palatable, protein-rich forage crop for livestock. It can be fed fresh, or dried and stored as hay fodder. *C. ternatea* also serves as a green manure cover crop, fixing atmospheric nitrogen and building soil quality over time. Commonly, *C. ternatea* is utilized as an ornamental in home gardens and along farm structures.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Azulejo
 - campanita morada
 - conchita azul
 - Diego
 - papito

Cultivation

- **Elevation** – up to 1800 m
- **Rainfall** – 400-4300 mm/year
- **Soil Types** – pH 4.5-9; prefers well-drained soils
- **Temperature Range** – 15-32°C
- **Day Length Sensitivity** – none
- **Light** – prefers full sun

C. ternatea can be directly broadcast as a stand-alone forage at 12-15 kg/ha, or in association with other forage species. If utilized in a forage bank, row spacing should be 15-50 cm between-row. *C. ternatea* quickly colonizes disturbed areas; exercise caution in planting it where it could cause unwanted displacement of existing vegetation.

Harvesting and Seed Production

As a forage species, *C. ternatea* is quick to establish and mature, and as such, grazing can begin sooner for this species than many other leguminous crops. It is tolerant of relatively heavy rotational grazing. Seeds should be mechanically scarified. If scarification is not possible, then increase seeding rates accordingly.

Pests and Diseases

Cercospora spp., *Rhizoctonia* spp., and other fungal leaf diseases are of minor concern. Pests include caterpillars and grasshopper, as well as root knot nematode.

Cooking and Nutrition

In some cultures, young pods are eaten as a vegetable, and flowers are used as a natural food colorant. *C. ternatea* is a good source of protein.

References

"*Clitoria Ternatea* L." Fact Sheet - *Clitoria ternatea*, 2017, www.tropicalforages.info/key/forages/Media/Html/entities/clitoria_ternatea.htm. Accessed 19 July 2019.

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Heuzé V., Tran G., Boval M., Bastianelli D., Lebas F., 2016. Butterfly pea (*Clitoria ternatea*). Feedipedia, a programme by INRA, CIRAD, AFZ and FAO. <https://www.feedipedia.org/node/318>. Accessed 19 July 2019.