

HAIRY VETCH

sand vetch, Sand Vetch, Winter Vetch

Vicia villosa

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Native to Europe or western Asia, *Vicia villosa* is suited to cooler climates. It is a viny legume with long, soft hairs on the stems and leaves. Branching, stems/vines are prostrate (30-70 cm), but can climb (up to 1-2 m) stalks of any neighboring plants. Stems support long, hanging groups of flowers (purple to blue, or white) and pods (each with up to 8 dark-colored seeds). Leaves consist of pairs of leaflets.

Uses

V. villosa is an excellent green manure cover crop, often used for soil improvement and protection. It is also used for pasture and hay. CAUTION: Be aware of potential toxicity to livestock, particularly cattle and horses grazing pastures comprised mostly of mature *V. villosa*.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - arvejilla vellosa
 - arvejilla de las arenas
 - veza de Rusia
 - vicia vellosa
 - vezo piloso
- French
 - vesce velue
- Portuguese
 - ervilhaca-velosa

Cultivation

- **Cultivation** -
- **Elevation** - up to 3,000 m
- **Rainfall** - 300 to 1,700 mm; tolerates some drought but not standing water
- **Soil Types** - wide range; tolerates some acidity; prefers well-drained loam or sandy soil
- **Temperature Range** - 8 to 22°C
- **Day Length Sensitivity** - n/a
- **Light** - prefers full sun

Sow seeds 2-4 cm deep into moist, weed-free soil. Plant during the spring or fall in temperate climates, or during the cooler winter months in subtropical areas. In high-elevation areas of the tropics, it may be possible to plant any time of year, as long as there is enough moisture at the start of the rains for plant establishment. When used for pasture or hay, *V. villosa* is commonly sown with grasses or small-grain cereals (e.g., rye, wheat, or oats). For a sole planting, seed at a rate of 28-39 kg/ha; reduce the monoculture rate by 25% if mixed with grasses. Little or no nitrogen fertilizer is needed. *V. villosa* has a greater need for potassium than other minerals.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Ground coverage occurs within 70-90 days. Heavy grazing or cutting below 10-15 cm slows regrowth. Seeds are produced 135-255 days after sowing. Pods mature at varying times; it is best to collect seeds when the lower pods are mature. Stored seeds remain viable for 5 or more years. For soil improvement, leave residues in the field. Incorporating chopped residues into the soil is a good option for vegetable gardens.

Pests and Diseases

V. villosa is susceptible to fungal diseases on the stems and leaves, root rot, parasitic nematodes, and insect pests. Use resistant varieties and avoid consecutive plantings on the same land.

Cooking and Nutrition

V. villosa is consumed by livestock only (see [Feedipedia](#) for nutritional attributes).

References

Ecocrop. 1993-2007. [Vicia villosa ssp. villosa](#). Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, Italy.

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