

WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



ALIEN INVADERS

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SWEET CLOVERS

Melilotus albus & *M. officinalis*

BASIC ID

This 2–4' tall plant has freely branching stems with small, alternate, trifoliate leaves. Typically acting as biennials, their racemes of fragrant, pea-like flowers usually bloom in mid-summer. *M. officinalis* has yellow flowers; *M. albus* has white.

FACTS

Native to Europe, they are widespread throughout North America especially in the Upper Midwest and Great Plains. Intolerant of shade, they can quickly invade open areas along roadsides and upland habitats like prairies, savannas, fields and forest edges. Sweet clovers are legumes and fix nitrogen in the soil, allowing them to thrive in nutrient poor areas. They are drought resistant and winter hardy, and can overtop and shade-out native, sun-loving species and out-compete other plants for water and nutrients. Each plant is able to produce up to 350,000 seeds that can remain viable for 30 years.

MANAGEMENT

- Hand pull first-year plants when roots are small.
- Prescribed burn for two or more consecutive years.
- Apply herbicide (foliar).

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Photos: Elizabeth J. Czarapata
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