Barrel Medic for wheatbelt pastures - Demonstrations show promise

B. F. Carlin

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INVESTIGATIONS with Barrel Medic (Medicago tribuloides) have indicated that this species has a wide range of usefulness as a leguminous pastoral plant for the heavier soils in those areas receiving less than 18 inches of rainfall annually. There has been a continued emphasis on improved pasture as the basis for better and more productive rotations and the outstanding part played by subterranean clover in utilising large areas of light sandplain in the higher rainfall districts is well known. Barrel medic (or Barrel Clover as it is sometimes called) should fill a somewhat similar position under the conditions for which it is suited.

It has a smooth burr which does not adhere readily to the wool of sheep and is a hardy plant, setting seed even in dry years, and appears to be reliable in its growth pattern.

Like other legumes it produces high quality feed and is palatable to stock. Hay made from a mixture of barrel medic and oats in the Waddi Forest district in 1956 gave an analysis of 16.1 per cent. protein.

Barrel medic and Wimmera ryegrass make a good pasture mixture, and in areas where commercial ryegrass does not mature freely, the early strain of ryegrass should be used.

The recommended seeding rates are 2 to 4 lb. of barrel medic and 1 lb. of Wimmera ryegrass per acre. On old land which previously had received substantial applications of phosphatic fertilisers 90 to 112 lb. of superphosphate would be a suitable application when planting. If the inoculated seed is to be mixed with the fertiliser, basic superphosphate at a rate of 100 to 130 lb. per acre should be used.

Before sowing, the barrel medic seed should be inoculated with the correct strain of rhizobial bacteria. The sowing should be made into a moist seed-bed as soon as possible after the inoculation, and inoculated seed should never be exposed to sunlight for any length of time as this will kill the bacteria.

DEMONSTRATION PLOTS
A number of barrel medic demonstration plots have been established by the Department of Agriculture during the past three seasons and those to the north and east of Moora have given very encouraging results. Some aspects of these plots are shown in the photographs accompanying this article. The diagram shows the general layout of the plots.

It will be seen that cross-treatments were used to check the effect of trace elements but no response to trace ele-
### BARREL MEDIC DEMONSTRATION PLOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Description</th>
<th>fertilizer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 lb. Inoculated Barrel Medic Seed plus 90 lb. Superphosphate per acre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 lb. Uninoculated Barrel Medic Seed plus 90 lb. Superphosphate per acre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 lb. Inoculated Barrel Medic Seed plus Basic Super (Super 90 lb., Lime 15 lb.) per acre</td>
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</tbody>
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- Super 70 lb. per acre
- Copper Ore 20 lb. per acre
- Zinc Oxide 3 lb. per acre
- Molybdenum 2 oz. per acre

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**Fig. 2.—Heavy second-year stand of barrel medic on F. Fowler’s property, Bolgart, 1955**

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ments has been observed in plots sown in the Moora district.

In June, 1955, one of these demonstration plots was sown on Roberts Farm one mile south of Dalwallinu on the Great Northern Highway. The land originally carried salmon-gum and morrel. Barrel medic has done well over the whole of the plot during 1955, 1956 and 1957.

In late May, 1956, a similar plot was sown on Mr. W. L. Broadhurst’s property, two miles north of Kirwan on the Kirwan-Burakin road.

This land originally carried salmon-gum. Although the spring of 1956 was very dry the barrel medic seeded down and re-established well in 1957. The response to inoculation was much more marked here than at Dalwallinu and in 1957—as the photograph shows—there was little growth on the uninoculated strip. Basic super also gave a response on this plot.

In July, 1957, a further area was sown on Mr. R. N. Tonkin’s property, one mile south of Coomberdale on the Geraldton
Highway. This land was also salmon-gum country and although the 1957 spring weather was by no means ideal and the planting was somewhat late, the plants made good growth and seeded heavily.

The demonstration plots have shown that barrel medic offers scope for pasture improvement on heavy land in the wheatbelt if planted according to Department of Agriculture recommendations.

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RAISIN FUDGE CAKE with ALMONDS

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or substitute.
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted brown sugar.
- 2 egg yolks.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar.
- 1 cup chopped raisins.
- 4 oz. melted chocolate.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup hot water.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thick sour milk.
- 2 cups S.R. flour.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon powdered cloves.
- 2 egg whites.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blanched almonds.
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar.

METHOD.

Beat the butter to a cream and gradually work in the first measure of sugar. Beat yolks of eggs, beat in second measure of sugar, raisins and melted chocolate. Sift together flour and spice, add to first mixture alternately with water and sour milk, lastly fold in egg whites, beaten very lightly. Turn into cake tin. Split almonds and press on edge each half nut in the top of the cake. Sift sugar over the almonds and top of cake. Bake 50 minutes in a moderate oven.

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