

Protocol for Planting ‘BeeWild’ Bundleflower

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‘BeeWild’ bundleflower (*Desmanthus bicornutus*) was released by TAES, out of the forage program at Beeville, and is marketed by Pogue Agri Partners in Kenedy, TX. They have exclusive rights to produce the components that make up this blend of four (4) different bundleflower lines.

We have had the best success with planting this warm-season perennial legume on soils where the pH is above 7, but have also been successful on certain soils with the pH in the 6 range. The plant does not perform well on sandy soils, but sandy loam and sandy clay loams are acceptable. So if your soil is sandy and the pH is below 6, then this plant MAY NOT work for you. We have not conducted a lot of soil fertility studies with this plant, so to date, we have not developed a firm guideline for fertility recommendations. Until we do, we suggest a basic P₂O₅ and K₂O treatment like you would use for other legumes. Once you get a stand, we think the P₂O₅ and K₂O requirements may be met with the soil sources. Since this is a legume, N fertilizer should not be required, but small amounts in fertilizer such as 18-46-0 or 11-52-0 for P₂O₅ sources should not be a problem. If you are planting on prepared seedbed, put the fertilizer on and cultivate it in for best results.

‘BeeWild’ grows best in the summertime when temperatures are high. The best time to plant is when soil temperatures are warm after early- to mid-April. We have had good success with June and July planting dates, but in the arid regions of Texas, irrigation is required for these late plantings. Fall plantings are not recommended.

‘BeeWild’ is a legume and it **will require inoculation prior to planting**. All seed is currently being sold as pre-inoculated and coated seed. Coated seed should be stored in cool AND dry conditions, as the heat and humidity contribute to the demise of the rhizobia that does the N-fixation. If it is not coated, you should have gotten a packet of inoculum with your seed.

PLANTING OPTIONS: A good stand can have as few as one plant per 1 to 3 square feet, as these plants will grow tall and branch out. We have planted it in 40-inch rows spaced 1 foot apart and it made a full canopy. This seed needs to be planted **ABOUT 1/4 INCH DEEP** and the recommended seeding rate is about 3 to 5 pounds per acre. To get most of it 1/4 inch deep, some will be on the surface and some will be deeper than 1/4 inch. If you want to plant on

undisturbed sod and have access to a no-till drill, apply 1 to 2 quarts/acre of Roundup on the vegetation to suppress it long enough to get the bundleflower a head start. The Roundup can be applied before or right after seeding. The bundleflower CAN germinate in 2 or 3 days, so get the Roundup applied before the bundleflower starts to emerge.

On cultivated land you have more options on how to plant the seed. The one common goal to keep in mind is that the seed needs to be no more than about 1/4 inch deep...to accomplish this with any degree of precision, **you must have a firm seedbed**. A firm seedbed will have been cultivated and then some type of a device run over the land to firm it up. You can use a drag, a roller, or a cultipacker...all will work. **Planting tools may include any of the following:** If you have access to a good grain drill that has a small seed box on it, you can use that, but you may need to pull the drop tubes out so that the seed just falls on the ground... Then drag or roll it... If you have trouble getting the seeding rate down to 5 lbs/A take some duct tape and cover up half or 2/3 of the holes on the inside, so that you only plant in alternate or every 3rd rows with the drill. Some may have a Brillion seeder...it should work fine if you can get it calibrated. If you do not have access to these types of tools, we have had extremely good success just broadcasting it on a cultivated but firm seedbed, and then drag it again or run a cultipacker or roller over it again after distributing the seed. On a small scale plantings, the hand held seeder that can be bought at Wal-mart or K-mart that is designed for putting grass seed or fertilizer on your yard will work... we used a setting of "2" and walk a fairly good pace... that comes fairly close to the correct seeding rate.

Weeds can be a problem, and tend to be an even bigger problem when planting when the soils are too cool. With cool soils, the bundleflower germinates slowly and the weeds get a head start. We have some chemicals that will control grasses and others that will control broadleaf weeds if applied when the weeds are small. Most all of the selective grass killers have no effect on bundleflower. But there is only one herbicide that is labeled for use on bundleflower and it is very toxic to bundleflower seedlings (so not sure why it is labeled).