



Forages

ALFALFA CULTIVARS

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Many alfalfa varieties are available for consideration by the farmer when selecting an alfalfa to plant. Little information is available with regard to which varieties do best in South Carolina. The best that can be done is to find out which varieties have done well on neighboring farms and to determine which insect and disease problems are the most severe so that varieties can be selected with high levels of resistance to the most severe problems. Two considerations are important in selecting a variety of alfalfa: The first is yield and the second is stand persistence. Both are determined to a large degree by the presence or absence of disease and insect problems.

Another consideration in selecting an alfalfa variety is the degree of fall dormancy or winterhardiness of the cultivar. Varieties with less fall dormancy will produce longer into the fall and, therefore, have greater yield potential but will be more susceptible to winter-kill. Varieties with fall dormancy ratings of 4-6 are appropriate for the piedmont and those with ratings of 6-8 would be best for the coastal plain and Savannah River valley. Certain alfalfa varieties with fall dormancy ratings of 8 will yield very well in the piedmont but may suffer more winter injury in severe years.

Table 1. Source of Alfalfa Varieties.

Variety	Source	Variety	Source
Advantage*	DeKalb-Pfizer Genetics	Raidor	Northrup King Co.
Apollo	AgriPro	Saranac AR	Public variety
Arc	Public variety	Southern Special	W-L Research
Armor**	AgriPro	Shenandoah	Great Plains
Baron	AgriPro	Vanguard*	AgriPro
Cimmaron	Great Plains	WL311+	W-L Research
Classic	Farmers Forage Research	WL318+	W-L Research
Defender*	Northrup King Co.	WL320	W-L Research
DK135	DeKalb-Pfizer Genetics	5432	Pioneer
Florida-77	Pioneer		
Hi-phy	Farmers Forage Research		

* No longer available.
 ** Limited availability.
 + Not available after 1987.



Table 2. Fall Dormancy, Insect and Disease Resistance of Alfalfa Varieties.

Variety	1/	2/	3/	4/	5/	6/	7/	8/	9/	10/	11/
Apollo	4	R	-	R	LR	R	MR	MR	-	MR	-
Arc	4	LR	-	MR	HR	-	-	HR	-	LR	LR
Armor	4	R	-	R	MR	R	-	-	-	-	-
Baron	6	MR	-	R	MR	R	HR	HR	HR	-	-
Cimmaron	4	HR	LR	HR	R	MR	HR	R	-	-	-
Classic	4	R	R	LR	LR	-	-	-	-	-	-
DK135	4	R	MR	R	MR	MR	MR	R	LR	R	-
Florida-77	8	-	-	HR	MR	-	MR	-	-	-	-
Hi-phy	4	HR	-	HR	-	MR	-	-	-	-	-
Raidor	4	R	-	MR	R	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saranac AR	4	MR	-	R	HR	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southern Special	6	R	LR	HR	MR	MR	R	HR	MR	MR	-
Shenandoah	5	HR	-	HR	HR	HR	-	-	-	MR	-
WL320	5	R	MR	HR	MR	R	R	MR	MR	MR	-
5432	4	HR	R	HR	-	MR	HR	R	-	-	-

1 Fall Dormancy
2 Bacterial Wilt
3 Verticillium Wilt
4 Fusarium Wilt
5 Anthracnose
6 Phytophthora Root Rot

7 Spotted Alfalfa Aphid
8 Pea Aphid
9 Blue Alfalfa Aphid
4 Fusarium Wilt
10 Stem Nematode
11 Root Knot Nematode

Fall Dormancy: 1 is most dormant and 8 is least dormant
LR (low resistance) less than 15 percent of plants are resistant; MR (moderate resistance) 15-30 percent of plants are resistant; R (resistant) 31-50 percent of plants are resistant; HR (highly resistant) more than 50 percent of plants are resistant.
A dash indicates no data available.

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