



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- growth** *Melilotus spp.* are monocarpic, annual or biennial herbs, 2-6 ft tall.
- flower** Small, sweet-scented, perfect flowers in small, slender spike-like terminal and axillary racemes. Deciduous petals, free from the filaments; white or yellow often fading to cream.
- leaves** Alternate, pinnately three-foliolate leaves. The leaflets are closely serrate, obovate-oblong and obtuse.
- fruit** Pods are 1 or 2 seeded and cross ribbed. Ovoid, leathery and wrinkled, longer than the calyx, and scarcely dehiscent.
- note** *****M. alba* has an erect, branched, glabrous or glabrate stem, 1-3 m high, with serrated, narrowly obovate to oblong leaflets that are truncate or emarginate. Corolla is 4-5 mm long; fruit is 3-4 mm long and somewhat reticulate. ****

*****M. officinalis* is similar in height and appearance to *M. alba*, the distinguishing feature being the yellow corolla. Corolla is 5-6 mm long; the fruit, 2.5-3.5 mm long, glabrous or glabrate and prominently reticulate.****



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Elevation:

Approx. 100-7500
feet

Ecotypes Invaded:

Scrublands, desertlands, grasslands, non-riparian & riparian areas,
woodlands & forests.

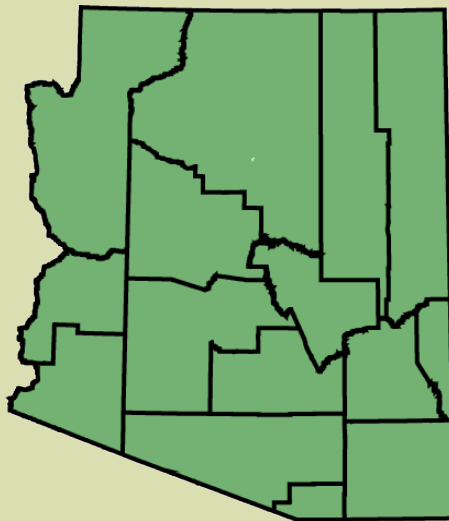
ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

Invades disturbed areas. Requires full sun. Can form dense stands along streams after disturbance but they are early successional and will not persist. Leaves resemble those of alfalfa, except the margins are serrated halfway or more back from the tip. Can be told from alfalfa by the absence of hair on the underside of the leaves and by its bitter taste.

Used for soil stabilization and erosion control on mine sites, road cuts, overgrazed rangeland and after fires. Species is annual or biennial; the build up of biomass and fine fuel could alter fire regimes in some habitats.

Currently known to occur in Cochise, Pinal, Maricopa Yavapai, Apache and Cocinino counties.

SUITABLE HABITAT



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Pase (1980) vegetation communities.

