



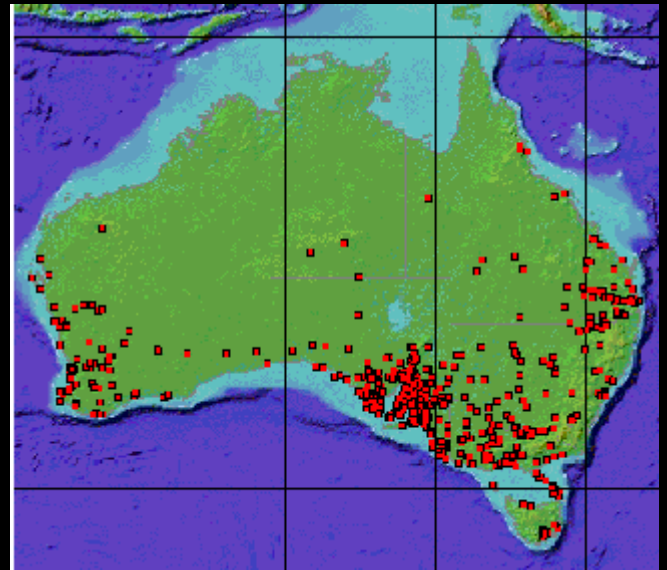
EDUCATE

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# Burr Medic

## *Medicago polymorpha*



Courtesy of Australian virtual herbarium

**Description:** Burr Medic is a low-growing, almost hairless, sprawling herb with leaves divided into 3 heart-shaped leaflets. The terminal leaflet is on a longer stalk than the two side leaflets. It has clusters of 2-7, small, yellow, pea-type flowers with petals. The fruit is a small, greenish-brown burr with 1-6 tight coils that are often spiny.

**As A Soil Indicator:** Low Calcium, Low Phosphorus, High bacterial activity, More abundant on heavy alkaline soils.

**Life cycle:** Annual. Germinates in autumn to winter and produces large amounts of palatable herbage in winter and spring. Flowers in spring and dies with the onset of summer drought and high temperatures.

**Beneficial:** Important pasture species especially on the heavy alkaline soils. Produces good quantities of palatable fodder over the winter to spring period. Burrs provide a protein supplement over summer. Fixes nitrogen. Nectary plant.

**Detrimental:** Considered a weed of crops, gardens, lawns, recreational areas and disturbed areas

**Toxicity:** Occasionally toxic causing photo sensitisation, clover sickness in sheep, cattle horses and pigs. Lambs including newly born ones are most affected. Mainly occurs on luxuriant growth during sunny weather in spring. May cause bloat in cattle..