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LOTUS CRETICUS

This plant species is common in Corsica, Spain, Barbaric Islands, France, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Algeria.

In Israel, it occurs on the sandy seashore, in the coastal Galilee, Acco Plain, Carmel coast and in the Philistean Plain. It is often associated with *Sparocotus virginicus*, *Agropyrum junceum* and *Ammophila arenaria*.

It is an effective sand-binder, creating multiple hills of sand on shifting dunes. It has been transplanted successfully by us into the North Sinai Peninsula, where it has prospered without irrigation. It is relatively easy to multiply it by seeding, after the seeds have been treated with glass paper. The collection of seeds has to be carefully handled as the siliques open suddenly and the seeds are scattered by the wind.

Trials to create mother plantations have proved successful and 50kg seed per hectare have been produced (200 granules = one gram).

Such mother plantations seem to be sensitive to nematodes and rust. Common chemicals for plant protection are suitable to solve this problem.

The roots possess nodules rich with nitrogen accumulative bacteria. Thus, these plants may improve sandy soil by accumulating nitrogen in the soil.

Besides acting as a fodder for sheep, it is also an ornamental plant due to its dark green colour, which it retains throughout the year.

Finally, it may definitely be considered as a drought resistant plant.

Reference

Le Houérou H. 1969. Principes, Méthodes et Techniques d'Amélioration Pastorale et Fourragère en Tunisie. Publication de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture (F.A.O.), Rome. Page 157: Le Lotier de Crète (Lotus creticus).