**Scientific Name:** *Astragalus agrestis* Dougl. ex G. Do  
**Family:** Fabaceae  
**Common Names:** cock's-head, field milkvetch, purple milkvetch

**Plant Description**  
Rhizomatous perennial, forming mats, reclining to ascending 10 to 30 cm long; hairless to hairy branches with black and white hairs; leaves, alternate and pinnately compound; linear to oblong-lanceolate, notched leaflets 1 to 2 cm, silky hairs cover the leaves; raceme flower cluster, dense spherical heads 1 to 4 cm, erect-ascending, purplish or whitish flower (Tannas 1997).  
**Fruit:** Pods, stalkless erect, egg shaped-oblong, 1cm, covered in black hairs (Tannas 1997).

**Habitat and Distribution**  
Found in fescue grassland, moist or depressional grassland in the driest regions, in sandy soils, montane and alpine slopes and meadows (Tannas 1997).

**Soil:** Medium textured soil with a pH range 6.3 to 7.7. No tolerance to salinity (USDA NRCS Plants Materials Database 2011).  
**Distribution:** Yukon, western District of Mackenzie to southern Hudson Bay south to California, New Mexico, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota (Moss 1983).

**Phenology**  
Summer bloom and growth period.

**Pollination**  
Flowers are pollinated by bees and other insects.

**Seed Dispersal**  
Seeds fall when pods dehisce.

**Genetics**  
2n=16 (Moss 1983).

**Symbiosis**  
Associated with nitrogen fixing bacteria.

**Seed Processing**  
**Collection:** Collect seed head when flowers fade; allow drying (Dave’s Garden n.d.).
Seed Weight: 260 seed/g or 3.84 g/1,000 seeds (USDA NRCS Plants Materials Database 2011).
Cleaning: Crush dried pods and winnow seed. Screen any remaining chaff.
Harvest Dates: Mid to late summer.
Storage Behaviour: Likely Orthodox.
Storage: Probable long term storage under IPGRI preferred conditions.
Longevity: No literature found.

Propagation
Natural Regeneration: Seed with slow to moderate spread rate. Mats spread out via rhizomes.
Germination: Many legumes benefit from scarification prior to germination.
Pre-treatment: Scarification.
Seeding Rate: Based on other Astragalus species, Pahl and Smreciu (1999) recommend a rate of 100 seeds/row m.
Grazing Response: Increaser; does not survive in abused or altered range (Tannas 1997).

Reclamation Potential
As a nitrogen fixing species, A. agrestis could be beneficial in an early seed mix.

Notes
Synonym: A. dasyglottis Fisch ex DC. (ITIS n.d.).

Photo Credits
Photo 3: Tracey Slotta @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

References


[http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ASAG2](http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ASAG2)

[Last accessed October 8, 2013].