



BELLEVUE
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COVER CROP

WHAT IS COVER CROP?

Any crop grown to cover bare soil as a way to increase fertility can be considered a cover crop. Planting cover crop is a great way to improve your garden soil during a dormant season.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PLANTING COVER CROPS?

They act as ground covers to suppress weeds, reduce insect pests and diseases, act as host to beneficial insects, prevent erosion, improve soil texture and fertility, and in the case of legumes, fix nitrogen. They can also increase microbial activity. Crops that are incorporated in the soil while still green or after flowering are referred to as "green manure". Green manuring replenishes soil nutrients through the microbial breakdown of organic matter.

WHEN/HOW SHOULD I PLANT COVER CROP?

A cover crop can be seeded as soon as any vegetable crop has reached maturity and has been harvested. If you have late fall crops, you can sow the cover crop seed in between the rows. Sow seeds while the weather is still warm enough for the seeds to germinate, usually before November. Simply spade or till the soil after harvest and sow the cover crop seed, raking the seed into the top 1/4" of soil. Keep moist.

WHAT SHOULD I PLANT?

Popular seeds are Rye grain and Legumes: Crimson Clover (strains), Garden Pea (strains), Vetch, and Faba (Fava) Beans. These can be planted as a single crop or are often mixed and planted as a blend because of the various benefits offered by different crops.

Austrian Peas: . Builds tilth and enriches soil. Late Sept - Mid- Nov.

Crimson Clover: Good weed controller and enriches the soil. Late Sept - Mid-Oct.

Faba Beans: Matures early. Deep roots help break up compacted soil. Late Sept - Mid-Nov.

Hairy Vetch: Very winter hardy vining annual. Prefers well-drained soil. Late Sept - Mid-Nov.

Rye: Germinates quickly and grows rapidly in cool weather. Sept. - early Nov.

THEN WHAT?

Cover crops seeded in the fall will continue to grow all winter, whenever it is warm, and then will be ready to be spaded or tilled-in just before planting time in late winter or early