

Cover Crop Chart

GROWTH CYCLE		PLANT ARCHITECTURE		RELATIVE WATER USE	
A	= Annual	∩	= Upright	●	= Low
B	= Biennial	*	= Upright-Spreading	●●	= Medium
P	= Perennial	≡	= Prostrate	●●●	= High

--GRASS--			--COOL--						--WARM--		--GRASS--			
			BROADLEAF											
			LEGUME											
A	ANNUAL FESCUE	∩									A	BROWNTOP MILLET	∩	
A	BARLEY	∩									A	AMARANTH	∩	
A	OAT	∩	A/B	CAMELINA	∩	A/P	MUSTARD	*	A	BALANSA CLOVER	∩	A	BUCKWHEAT	∩
A	WHEAT	∩	A	PHACELIA	∩	A/B	CANOLA	*	A	BERSEEM CLOVER	∩	A	QUINOA	∩
A/B	ANNUAL RYEGRASS	∩	A	FLAX	∩	A	RADISH	*	A	CRIMSON CLOVER	∩	A	VELVET BEAN	∩
A	CEREAL RYE	∩	A	KALE	∩	B	TURNIP	*	B/P	RED CLOVER	∩	A	MUNG BEAN	∩
A	TRITICALE	∩	A	SPINACH	∩	B	BEET	*	P	WHITE CLOVER	∩	A	SOYBEAN	∩
P	SALINE TOLERANT	∩	A/B	CHARD	∩	A/B	CARROT	*	P	KURA CLOVER	∩	A	PEANUT	∩
									A/P	CHICKPEA	∩	A	PEARL MILLET	∩
									A	PEA	∩	A	PROSO MILLET	∩
									A	LUPIN	∩	A	GRAIN SORGHUM	∩
									A	LENTIL	∩	A	SUDAN GRASS	∩
									A	FABA BEAN	∩	A	TEFF	∩
									A/P	SWEET CLOVER	∩	A	CORN	∩
									A/P	PIGEONPEA	∩	A		∩
									A	PARTRIDGE PEA	∩	A		∩
									A	SUNNHEMP	∩	A		∩

The Cover Crop Chart is produced and distributed by the staff of the Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory, Mandan, ND

The Cover Crop Chart represents a compendium of information from multiple sources. Primary sources of information included the Midwest Cover Crops Council, USDA-SARE, USDA-NRCS PLANTS database, and relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. Designation of warm/cool season crops is based on prevalent growth habits and not photosynthetic pathway. Ranges for seeding depth take into consideration moisture conditions at planting and variation in soil texture. Values for crude protein and C:N ratio assume homogenous samples of aboveground plant material unless stated otherwise. Information on specific crops is occasionally generalized, approximate, and/or incomplete and may not reflect performance in on-farm conditions. USDA-ARS makes no guarantee to the performance of specific crops based on information provided herein. Content and data for crops were assembled by Holly Johnson and Mark Liebig with input from Dave Archer, V.C. Baligar, Heather Dose, Wayne Duckwitz, Marvin Hatzenbuehler, Jay Halvorson, John Hendrickson, Naeem Kalwar, Robert Kolberg, Nancy Jensen, Steve Merrill, Kristine Nichols, Delmer Schlenker, Marty Schmer, Eric Scholljegerdes, Don Tanaka, Cal Thorson, and Dawn Wetch. Chart design by Mark Liebig, Holly Johnson, and Jill Gunderson. The Cover Crop Chart was originally generated with input from producers and technicians in the Area IV Soil Conservation Districts of North Dakota and NRCS staff at the Bismarck and Dickinson Field/Area Offices.

• Useful cover crop resources:

- **Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 3rd Ed. Andy Clark (Ed.). Handbook Series Book 9, Sustainable Agriculture Network, Beltsville, MD.**
- **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, University of California-Davis, www.sarep.ucdavis.edu**
- **USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Technical Documents Search, www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/publications/search**
- **Midwest Cover Crops Council, www.mccc.msu.edu**
- **USDA-NRCS, PLANTS Database, www.plants.usda.gov**

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Cover Crop Chart

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Crop Sequence Effects

CROP RESIDUE	----- HIGH RISK CROPS (Crops with the worst performance following a particular residue) -----								
Barley	Barley								
Wheat	Wheat								
Canola	Canola	Mustard	Pea	Dry Bean	Flax	Safflower			
Mustard	Soybean	Sunflower							
Flax	Flax								
Pea	Pea	Flax							
Lentil	Lentil								
Chickpea	Buckwheat	Lentil							
Soybean	Canola	Wheat	Barley						
Buckwheat	Chickpea	Sunflower	Grain Sorghum	Sunflower					
Safflower	Safflower	Sunflower	Soybean	Mustard	Dry Bean				
Sunflower	Sunflower	Canola	Pea	Lentil	Buckwheat	Grain Sorghum	Corn	Wheat	Barley
Proso Millet	Proso Millet	Grain Sorghum	Buckwheat						
Grain Sorghum	Grain Sorghum	Proso Millet	Pea	Lenti	Wheat				
Corn	Corn	Wheat	Buckwheat	Grain Sorghum	Proso Millet				

Table adapted from Crop Sequence Calculator (v. 3.1).

Software available for download at <https://www.ars.usda.gov/plains-area/mandan-nd/ngprl/>


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Annual fescue

(*Vulpia myuros* L.; *Fetuca* sp.)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate names: Rattail fescue, Foxtail fescue
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ – 1 inch
- Crude protein: hay 8-10%
- Benefits from arbuscular mycorrhizal associations



Barley

(*Hordeum vulgare* L.)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Low water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{3}{4}$ – 2 inches
- Crude protein: hay 10-15%, grain 11-15%
- C:N ratio: 20
- Benefits from arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil

◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Oat

(*Avena sativa* L.)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
- Crude protein: hay 9-15%, grain 13-18%
- C:N ratio: 33
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil



Wheat

(*Triticum aestivum* L.)

- Cool season, grass
 - Annual
 - Upright plant architecture
 - Includes spring and winter wheat varieties
 - Medium water use
 - Good to fair salinity tolerance
 - Seeding depth: ½ – 1 ½ inches
 - Crude protein: straw 4-10%, grain 12-16%
 - C:N ratio: leaf 15-29, stem 31-65, root 24-74 , straw 80-95 [*end of season*]
 - Benefits from arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Self pollinator (wind)
 - Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- ◆ [View table for known crop sequence effects](#)



Annual Ryegrass

(*Festuca perennis* L.)

(formerly *Lolium multiflorum* Lam. or *Lolium perenne* L. ssp. *multiflorum* (Lam.) Husnot)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual, Biennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate names: Italian ryegrass, Rye grass
- High water use
- Fair to moderate salinity tolerance; varies by cultivar (3 – 6 ds/m)
- Seeding depth: ¼ - ½ inch
- Crude protein: 20% minimum; Digestible dry matter 70%; C:N Ratio 45
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- May become invasive in certain regions/habitats (SW United States); can displace desirable vegetation if not properly managed
- Avoid allowing crop to go to seed. Annual ryegrass should not be used in crop rotation that utilizes wheat.
- Several glyphosate resistant biotypes have been identified

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Institution, Botany Dept.

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Cool Season Grass

Cereal rye

(*Secale cereale* L.)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- High water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ – 2 inches
- Crude protein: straw 4%, grain 14%
- C:N ratio: 40 – 50*
 - * This number can vary based on whether the plant was grown in monoculture or a biculture and the stage the plant was in when it was tested
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil



Triticale

(*Triticale hexaploide* Lart.; *Triticosecale rimpau* Wittm.)

- Cool Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Fall and spring types available
- High water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 ½ – 2 inches
- Crude protein: hay 9-16%, grain 17%
- C:N ratio: 20
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)



Saline Tolerant Grasses

Supplemental information for saline tolerant species adapted from:

USDA-NRCS, Bismarck Plant Materials Center; North Dakota State University, Carrington Research Extension Center. "Cool Season Grass Performance on Saline Soils in the Northern Great Plains." Fact Sheet. Bismarck, ND. 2019.

- Cool season
- Perennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Low to moderate water use
- Moderate to high salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – 1 inch
- Crude protein: 7 – 19%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Many species are available in this category; each varies slightly in plant characteristics
- *See the next six slides for more detail*



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Saline Tolerant

Cool Season Grass

RS Hybrid Wheatgrass

(*Elymus hoffmannii* K.B. Jensen & K.H. Asay)

- Cool season, grass
- Perennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Green wheatgrass
- Low water use
- High salinity tolerance (8 – 9.5 ds/m)
- Seeding depth: ¼ – ½ inch
- Crude protein: 7 – 12%
- RS hybrid wheatgrass is a hybrid between quackgrass (*Elymus repens*) and bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*)
- >2.5 ton/ac on soils 4 – 21 ds/m



Photo courtesy of Roger Hybner, USDA-NRCS, Bridger Plant Materials Center, MT



Photo courtesy of Roger Hybner, USDA-NRCS, Bridger Plant Materials Center, MT

Tall Wheatgrass

(*Thinopyrum ponticum* (Podp.))

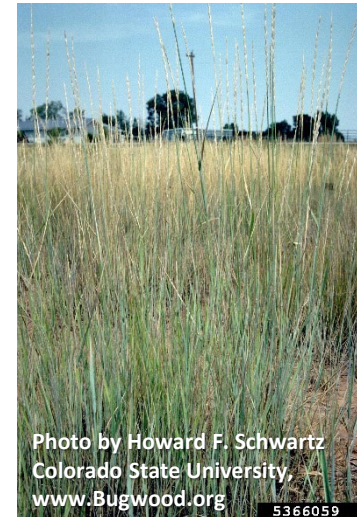
- Cool season, grass
- Perennial (introduced)
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Rush wheatgrass
- Moderate water use
- High salinity tolerance (8 – 9.5 ds/m)
- Seeding depth: ¼ – 1 inch
 - *shallower for finer textured soils
- Crude protein: 7 – 19%
 - vegetative >10%
 - late bloom 6%
 - fully mature 2-3%
- >2.5 ton/ac on soils 4 – 21 ds/m



Intermediate Wheatgrass

(*Thinopyrum intermedium* (Host) Barkworth & D.R. Dewey)

- Cool season, grass
- Perennial (introduced)
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Pubescent wheatgrass
- Low to moderate water use; drought tolerant
- Moderate salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ – 1 inch
- Crude protein: 8 – 17%*
 - *Northern Plains: may fall below 4% at the end of the season
- Cross-pollinates.
- Spreads vegetatively; under ideal conditions, it can slowly spread into adjacent communities
- Persistence of stand is limited (typically < 5 yr)



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Saline Tolerant

Cool Season Grass

Slender Wheatgrass

(*Elymus trachycaulus* (Link) Gould ex Shinnars)

- Cool season, grass
- Perennial, short-lived (native)
- Upright plant architecture
- Low water use; will not tolerate water-logged soils
- Moderate salinity tolerance (6 – 8.5 ds/m)
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch
- Crude protein: 22 – 25% (Spring); less than 10% (fall)
- May form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- \approx 2.5 ton/ac on soils 5 – 16 ds/m



Russian Wildrye

(*Psathyrostachys junceus* (Fisch.) Nevski)

- Cool season, grass
- Perennial (introduced)
- Upright plant architecture
- Low water use
 - drought tolerant
 - does not tolerate flooding
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
 - Sensitive to seeding depth – too deep will inhibit seed germination
- Crude protein: 5 – 17 %
- Difficult to establish

Photo by Larry Holzworth
USDA-ARS, NRCS Idaho Plant Materials Program and
USDA-ARS, Forage and Range Research Laboratory



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Saline Tolerant

Cool Season Grass

Alkaligrass

(*Puccinellia* sp. Parl.)

- Cool season, grass
- Perennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Nuttall's alkaligrass, *Puccinellia nuttalliana* [Schult.] Hitch.
 - Native to semi-arid, North American zones
- Weeping alkaligrass; European alkali grass, *Puccinellia distans* [Jacq.] Parl.
 - Introduced [Eurasia]
 - Highest salinity tolerance of this genus
- Low to moderate water use
 - Can survive arid areas as well as marsh, basin, or wetland zones
- Excellent salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ - ½ inch

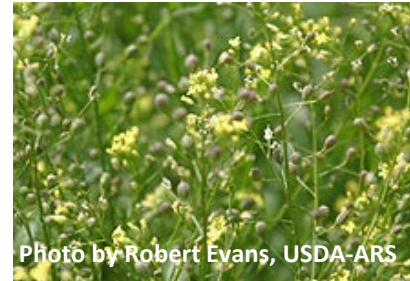
- *This slide completes the review of saline tolerant grasses*



Camelina

(*Camelina sativa* (L.) Crantz)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Biennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate names: False flax, gold-of-pleasure, linseed dodder, largeseed falseflax, leindotter, Siberian oilseed
- Low water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- Crude Protein: 46%
- C:N Ratio: stems 40-95; pods 25-70; seed 12-16
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Mainly a self pollinator but benefits genetically from exposure to high population of pollinators
- Sensitive to soil herbicide imidazolinones and sulfentrazone
- Volunteer plants can become problematic
- Potentially allelopathic for flax



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Cool Season Broadleaf

Phacelia

(*Phacelia tanacetifolia* Benth.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Low water use
- Low salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- C:N ratio: 10 – 15
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts beneficial insects



Flax

(Linum usitatissimum L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ – 1 ½ inch
- Benefits from arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



Kale

(*Brassica napus* L. var. *pabularia*)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Alternate names: also found under
Brassica oleracea – Acephala group
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Major types:
 - Siberian
 - Russian
- Medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: $\approx 30\%$
- C:N ratio: 10 – 30
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations



Spinach

(*Spinacia oleracea* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Low to medium water use
- Moderate salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: $\approx 20\%$
- C:N ratio: 6 – 8
- Sensitive to acid soils
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations



Chard

(*Beta vulgaris* L. ssp. *cicla* (L.) W.D.J. Koch)

- Cool season, broadleaf
- Annual, Biennial
- Upright spreading plant architecture
- Alternate names: Swiss chard, silverbeet, perpetual spinach, spinach beet, crab beet, bright lights, seakale beet, and mangold
- High water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ - 1 inch
- Crude Protein: 32%
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)



Photos by Joseph LaForest, University of Georgia,
www.Bugwood.org

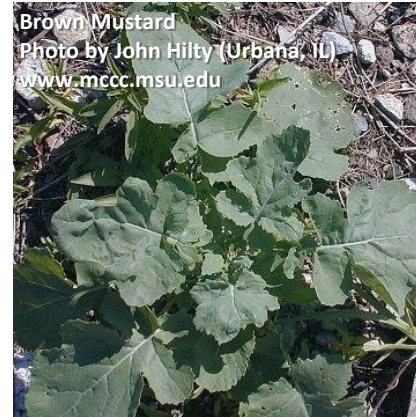


Mustard

(*Brassica sp.* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Major types: Indian, Oriental, brown, yellow
- Related to crambe
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: hay 10%, grain 24-35%
- C:N ratio: 10 – 30
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Plants from the *Brassica* group have potential to release compounds or metabolic by-products that work as bio-toxins against bacteria, fungi, insects, nematodes, and weeds
- Flowers may attract pollinators

◆ [View table for known crop sequence effects](#)

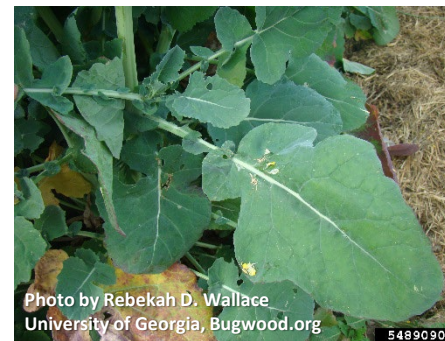


Canola

(*Brassica napus*)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Major types:
 - Annual (spring-type)
 - Biennial (winter-type)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Alternate name: Rapeseed
- Medium water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ – 1 inch
- Crude protein: shoots 20-30, hay 16%, grain 21%, silage 12%, pasture 17%
- C:N ratio: leaf 12-16, stem 21-37, root 24-43
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Flowers attract pollinator

◆ [View table for known crop sequence effects](#)



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Cool Season Broadleaf

Radish

(*Raphanus sativus*)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Root crop
- Major types:
 - Oilseed (var. *oleiformis*)
 - Forage (var. *niger*): Daikon
- High water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: 26-30%
- C:N ratio: oilseed 19 – 20
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Flowers attract pollinators



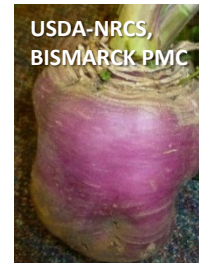
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Cool Season Broadleaf

Turnip

(*Brassica rapa* L. var. *rapa*)

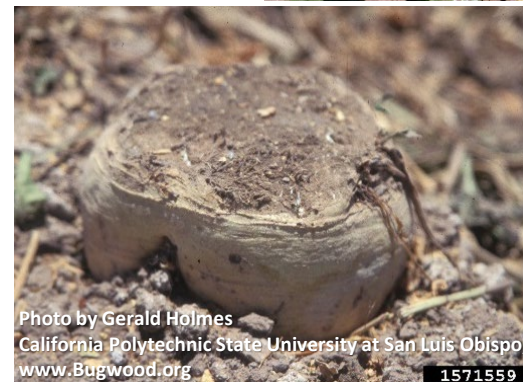
- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Biennial
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Root crop
- High water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: tops 16%, root 12 – 14%
- C:N ratio: shoots 20 – 30, root 10 – 20
- Closely related to rutabaga
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Flowers attract pollinators



Beet

(Beta vulgaris)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Biennial
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Root crop
- High water use
- Variable salinity tolerance, depending on beet type
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch
- Crude protein: tops 12-15%, root 7-10%
- C:N ratio: tops 11 – 14
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Multiple sub-species including garden beets and sugar beets



Carrot

(Daucus carota var. sativus L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Major types:
 - Biennial (cultivated)
 - Annual (wild)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Root crop
- High water use
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- Crude protein: 10%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Plants may bolt and flower starting in second year of growth
- Flowers may attract pollinators



Balansa Clover

(*Trifolium michelianum* Savi ssp. *balansae* (Boiss.) Ponert)

- Cool season, broadleaf
- Annual, short-lived Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright, upright spreading, or prostrate plant architecture
 - multibranching rosette but prostrate when grazed
- Also called bigflower clover
- Moderate salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ inch
- Crude protein: 15 - 20%
 - variable depending on plant stage @ harvest
- C:N ratio: 15
- Requires inoculation with root-nodule bacterium *Rhizobium sp.* at planting
- Flowers attract pollinators



Photo by Annie Young-Mathews, USDA-NRCS, Corvallis Plant Materials Center

Berseem Clover

(*Trifolium alexandrinum* L.)

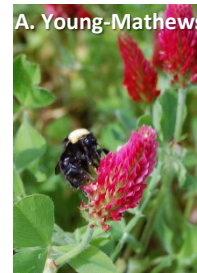
- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Egyptian clover
- Low water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – 1 inch
- Crude protein: 27-29%
- C:N ratio: 18 – 23
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



Crimson Clover

(*Trifolium incarnatum* L.)

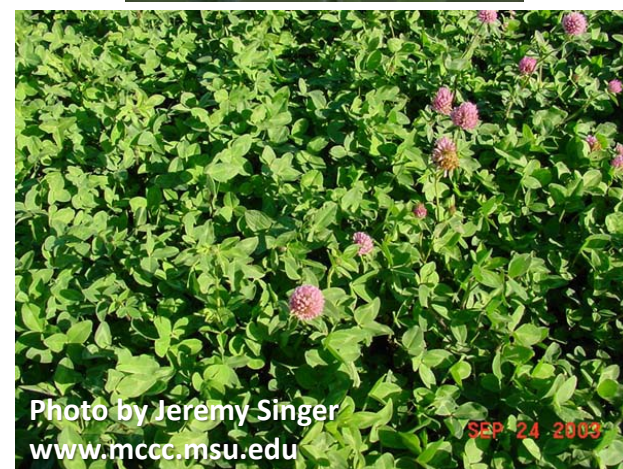
- Cool season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ - ½ inch
- Crude protein: 18%
- C:N ratio: 16 - 19
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



Red Clover

(*Trifolium pratense* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Biennial, short-lived Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Two types:
 - medium, perennial or biennial; (2-3 cuts per season)
 - mammoth (1 cut per season)
- Medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: 15%
- C:N ratio: 15 – 23
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



White Clover

(*Trifolium repens* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading or prostrate plant architecture
- 3 Types grouped by size:
 1. **Large:** tallest of the white clovers, upright architecture, high forage quality but less durable [var. Ladino]
 2. **Intermediate:** most common white clover, flowers earlier, and has a higher heat tolerance, upright architecture [var. Dutch white, New Zealand White]
 3. **Small:** lowest growing type, prostrate; survives grazing [var. Wild White]
- Medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ inch
- Crude protein: 24 – 30%
- C:N ratio: 13 – 23
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators
- Aggressive growth in some regions or habitats; may displace desirable vegetation if not properly managed



Kura Clover

(*Trifolium ambiguum* M. Bieb.)

- Cool season, broadleaf
- Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Prostrate plant architecture
- Also called Caucasian, honey, and pellet clover
- Moderate water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: 23 – 25%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal association
- Flowers attract pollinators

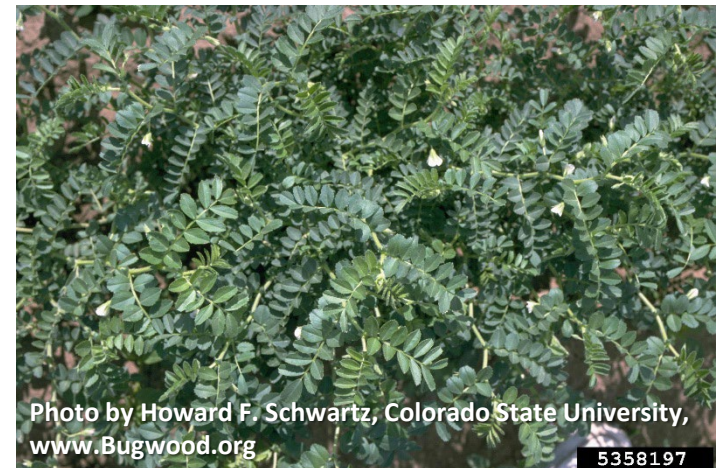


Chickpea

(*Cicer arietinum* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Two types
 - Desi
 - Kabuli
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Alternate name: garbanzo bean
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 ½ – 2 inches
- Crude protein: straw 6%, grain 22%
- C:N ratio: leaf 10-15, stem 26-56, root 16-27
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators

◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Pea

(Pisum sativum arvense L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N fixation)
- Upright plant architecture (vine)
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 3 inches
- Crude protein: hay 14%, grain 24%, silage 15%
- C:N ratio: leaf 13-25, stem 27-83, root 17-27
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators

◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Lentil

(*Lens culinaris* Medik.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 1 ½ inch
- Crude protein: hay 14%, grain 28%, silage 15%
- C:N ratio: leaf 11-21, stem 25-49, root 22-30
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self-pollinated but flowers may attract pollinators

◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Cool Season Legume

Lespedeza

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Variable plant architecture
- Seeding depth: ¼ - ½ inch
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Lespedeza species are considered useful for forage, wildlife habitat, and reducing erosion
- Native & Introduced species
 - Native (U.S.)
 - Roundhead lespedeza, *Lespedeza capitata* (Michx.)
 - Introduced
 - Common lespedeza, *Kummerowia striata* (Thunb.) Schindl.
 - Korean lespedeza, *Kummerowia stipulacea* (Maxim.) Makino
 - Annuals
 - Sericea lespedeza *Lespedeza cuneata* (Dum. Cours.) G. Don
 - Perennial
- *Introduced species are adapted for warmer climates but have the potential to become weed-like (and are considered noxious weeds in certain areas of the U.S.)*



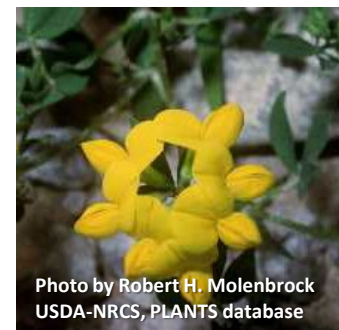
Roundhead lespedeza, Photos by Chris Evans
Illinois Wildlife Action Plan
www.Bugwood.org



Birdsfoot trefoil

(*Lotus corniculatus* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Perennial, short lived
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Prostrate plant architecture
- Low to medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: hay 16 - 22%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators



Vetch

(*Vicia sp.*)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Biennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Prostrate plant architecture (vine)
- Common examples include hairy, purple, common, and smooth vetch
- Low to medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 ½ – 2 ½ inches
- Crude protein: 13-20%
- C:N ratio: 10 – 19
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators

Hairy Vetch



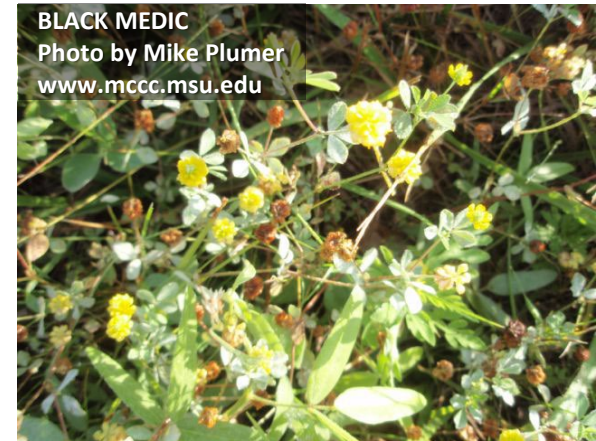
Common Vetch, Photos by Annie Young-Mathews,
USDA-NRCS Corvallis Plant Materials Center



Medic

(*Medicago* spp.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Over 35 known medic species exist. Common examples include barrel, black, & burr.
- Low water use
- Poor to fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ¼ inch
- Crude protein: black medic 19-21%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators



Lupin

(*Lupinus sp.* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Examples include blue, narrow-leaved, European yellow, white, Spanish, etc.
- Low water use
- Prefers acid soils
- Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
- Crude protein: silage 15%
- C:N ratio: leaf 12-30, stem 25-49
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



Faba Bean

(*Vicia faba* L.)

- Cool season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture (vine)
- Alternate names: Bell bean, horse bean, Fava bean
- Medium water use; poor drought tolerance
- Moderate salinity tolerance (depending on variety)
- Seeding depth: 2-4 inches
- Crude protein: 17%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators



Sweetclover

(*Melilotus* sp. L)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Biennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Two types
 - yellow *Melilotus officinalis* L.
 - white *Melilotus alba* L.
- Upright plant architecture
- Moderate water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ inch
- Crude protein: 11-18%
- C:N ratio: 12 – 23
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators



Alfalfa

(*Medicago sativa* L.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: lucerne
- High water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: 14-22%
- C:N ratio: 11 – 13
- Non-dormant cultivars can perform like an annual
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Good at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Attracts pollinators



Sainfoin

(*Onobrychis viciifolia* Scop.)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
- Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Medium to high water use
- Fair to poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch
- Crude protein: 13-20%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators



Cowpea

(*Vigna unguiculata* L.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture (vine)
- Alternate names: Southern pea, black-eye pea
- Low water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: $\frac{3}{4}$ – 1 inch
- Crude protein:
 - grain and leaves 19-30%
 - stems 13-17%
- C:N ratio: 18 – 22
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators



Lablab

(*Lablab purpureus* (L.) Sweet)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading (vine) or prostrate plant architecture
 - Planting date determines growth habit
- Formerly called *Dolichos lablab* L.
- Alternate names: *Val* bean, hyacinthbean, Indian butter bean, helmet bean, Egyptian kidney bean,
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 4 inches
- Crude protein:
 - leaves 21-38%
 - seeds 20-28%
- C:N ratio: 17 (green manure/Brazil); 34 (North Carolina)
- Doesn't easily form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations

Photo courtesy of Christopher Sheahan, USDA-NRCS, Cape May Plant Materials Center, NJ



Photo Courtesy of Jeff McMillian, Hosted by the USDA-NRCS, Plants Database



Fenugreek

(*Trigonella sp.* L.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Two types:
 - cultivated [*T. corniculata*];
 - forage or sickle fruit [*T. foenum-graecum*]
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Greek hay
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
- Crude protein: 16 – 25%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Used as a forage, spice, and for health benefits*
 - *contains nutraceuticals:
 1. steroidal sapogenin
 2. galactomannan
 3. isoleucine



Ravikant Rahul Pandey's Photography
www.ephotosworld.com

Pigeonpea

(*Cajanus cajan* (L.) Millsp.)

- Warm season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Alternate names: Angola pea, Congo pea, dhal, no-eye pea, gungo pea, and red gram
- Low water use
- Moderate to high salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 ½ – 4 inches
- Crude protein: 28-36%; leaf alone 10 – 15%
- C:N ratio: 20
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Mostly self-pollinated



Partridge Pea

(*Chamaecrista fasciculata* (Michx.) Greene var. *fasciculata* ;
Cassia fasciculata Michx.; *Cassia chamaecrista* L.)

- Warm season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate names: sleeping plant, prairie senna, large-flowered sensitive-pea, locust weed, dwarf cassia, golden cassia
- Low to moderate water use
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{4}$ " – $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators, especially bees
- Used as a green manure, forage, or fiber crop
 - Forage is nutritious but also contains cathartic substance in fresh material or hay which can potentially be dangerous to cattle. Check before feeding to livestock
- Attractive to wildlife, particularly several game bird species
- Potential for phytoremediation (tolerance to cadmium)



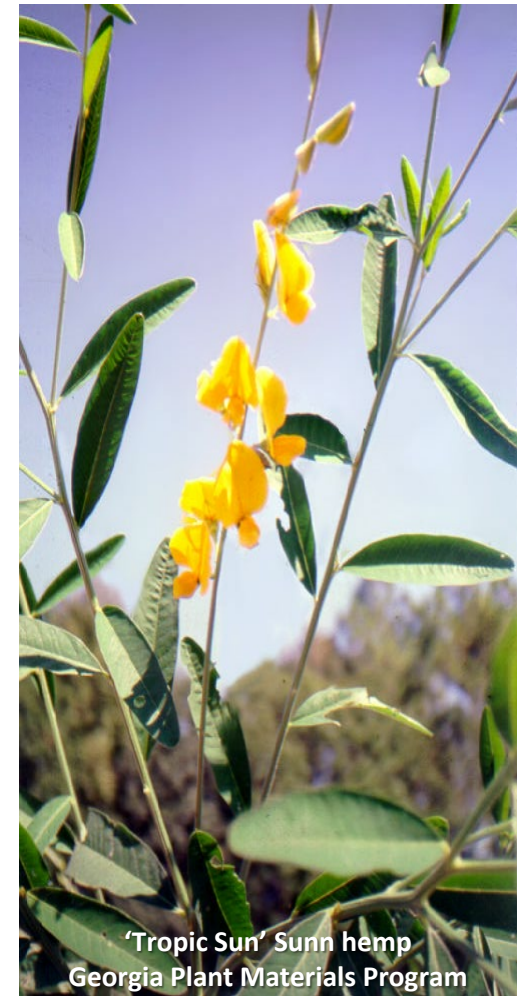
Photos by Alan Shadow
USDA-NRCS,
East Texas Plant Materials Center



Sunnhemp

(*Crotalaria juncea* L.)

- Warm season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright plant architecture
- Low to moderate water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½" – 2 ½" inches
- 'Good' N-fixation capacity
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinates (wind) as well as cross-pollinates (insects/birds)
- Rated 'Excellent' at controlling soil nematodes
- Used as a green manure, forage*, or fiber crop
 - * Certain cultivars contain alkaloids which are poisonous to livestock; check before feeding to animals



Cluster bean

(*Cyamopsis tetragonoloba* L. Taub)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Alternate names: Guar, guar bean, gavar, guvar bean
- Low water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 1 ½ inch
- Crude protein:
 - Straw 7 – 10%
- C:N ratio: 65 (residue)
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self-pollinated
- Can be used as a green manure or forage
- Plant extract (gum) has industrial uses



Jack bean

(*Canavalia ensiformis* (L.) DC.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture (vine)
- Alternate names: wonderbean, sword-bean, coffee bean, giant stock-bean, horse-bean
- Low water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 3 inches
- Crude protein: \approx 30%
- C:N ratio: 21 (green manure/Brazil)

* **Special Note:**

HUMAN: Although young pods/green seeds can be eaten, mature beans can contain harmful compounds and must be cooked prior to eating

LIVESTOCK: Because of the potential toxic compounds in the seed, meal must be heat-treated to denature the enzymes or limited to 30% of the ration



Velvet bean

(*Mucuna pruriens* (L.) DC.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual, Biennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture (vine)
- Alternate names: Itchy bean, buffalobean, bengal bean, devil bean, cowitch
- Low water use
- Seeding depth: 1-3 inches*
 - * In some circumstances, can be planted as deep as 4 inches
- Crude protein: leaves 11-23%; grain 20-35%
- C:N ratio: 29
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Moderate at accumulating nitrogen

Special Note:

- * Seed contains an amino-acid (L-dopa) that may be used for medicinal purposes. However, if untreated it can be toxic to humans or non-ruminant animals
- * Tiny hairs on mature pods are a skin irritant. To avoid, terminate plant before seed production.



Mung bean

(*Vigna radiata* L.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading plant architecture
- Low to medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 ½ – 3 inches
- Crude protein: 16-23%
- C:N ratio: 10 – 15
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self-pollinated



Soybean

(*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
 - Annual
 - Legume (N-fixation)
 - Upright and spreading plant architecture
 - Medium water use
 - Poor salinity tolerance
 - Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
 - Crude protein: hay 17%, grain 42%
 - C:N ratio: leaf 14, stem 39, root 34
 - Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Self-pollinated but flowers may attract pollinators
- ◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Peanut

(Annual - *Arachis hypogaea* L.; Perennial – *Arachis glabrata* L.)

- Warm season, broadleaf
- Annual, Perennial
- Legume (N-fixation)
- Upright and spreading (annual) or prostrate (perennial) plant architecture
- Alternate name: Groundnut
- High water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 4 inches
 - *Perennial peanuts are planted using rhizomes only
- Crude Protein: 13 – 20%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Mainly self-pollinate (wind); small % cross-pollinate
- Rated 'Efficient' at scavenging P & K from soil
- Perennial varieties used as cattle forage

Annual Peanut - *Arachis hypogaea*



Photo by Rebekah D. Wallace
University of Georgia, Bugwood.org 5422962



Photo by William M. Brown Jr.
www.Bugwood.org

5356949

Perennial Peanut - *Arachis glabrata*



Photo - Bruce Cook
www.tropicalforages.info © DPT & F

Amaranth

(*Amaranthus sp.*)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Over 50 species; some exhibiting glyphosate resistance
- Low water use
- Tolerant of heat and drought
- Seeding depth: ½ – 2 inches
- Crude protein: ≈ 14%
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self-pollinated (wind)
- Flowers may attract pollinators



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Warm Season Broadleaf

Buckwheat

(*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench; *Fagopyrum sagittatum* Gilib)

- Cool Season, broadleaf
 - Warm season growth characteristics
 - Annual
 - Upright plant architecture
 - Medium water use
 - Poor salinity tolerance
 - Enhances soil P availability
 - Seeding depth: ½ inch
 - Crude protein: straw 5%, grain 13%
 - C:N ratio: leaf 8-10, stem 12-32, root 28-47
 - Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Attracts pollinators
- ◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Quinoa

(*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd.)

- Warm season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Moderate water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ - 1 inch
- Crude protein: 14%
- C:N ratio: 14-25
- Does not form arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinates (wind); up to 15% may cross-pollinate
- Not susceptible to cereal diseases; slightly vulnerable to soil nematodes
- No registered herbicides for quinoa at this time



Chicory

(*Cichorium intybus* L.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Perennial
- Upright and spreading plant architecture (vine)
- Alternate names: French endive, succory
- Medium water use
- Seeding depth: $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Crude protein: 10-32%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators
- Rated 'very good' at scavenging nitrogen from the soil
- Highly invasive



Cucurbita sp. [Family]

- This is a broad grouping including squash, gourd, cucumber, melon, and pumpkin
- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Prostrate plant architecture (vine)
- Seeding depth: ½ – 1 inch
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Attracts pollinators
- Can be used for weed suppression as a 'smother crop'



Photos by Howard F. Schwartz
Colorado State University,
www.Bugwood.org



Safflower

(*Carthamus tinctorius* L.)

- Warm Season, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- High water use
- Good salinity tolerance
- Deep rooted
- Effective at 'mining' mobile nutrients deep in the soil profile
- Seeding depth: 1 – 1 ½ inch
- Crude protein: hay 10-13%, grain 18%
- C:N ratio: leaf 21, stem 56, root 73
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators

◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Sunflower

(*Helianthus annuus* L.)

- C3 plant with warm season growth characteristics, broadleaf
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- High water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Deep rooted
- Effective at 'mining' mobile nutrients deep in the soil profile
- Seeding depth: 1 – 3 ½ inches
- Crude protein: silage 11-12%, grain 20-28%
- C:N ratio: leaf 11-14, stem 41-46, root 50-68, flower 14-19
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Flowers attract pollinators

◆ [View table for known crop sequence effects](#)



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Warm Season Broadleaf

Browntop Millet

(*Urochloa ramosa* (L.) Nguyen)

- Warm Season, grass
- Annual, Perennial
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: dixie signalgrass
- Moderate water use
- Seeding depth: ½ - 1 inch
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)

Special Notes:

- * *If grown under dry or cold conditions, plant has potential to accumulate toxic levels of nitrate. Test before feeding to livestock.*
- * *Regarded as a weedy species in some areas of the United States.*
- * *Can be used for soil remediation of lead and zinc contamination.*



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Warm Season Grass

Foxtail Millet

(*Setaria italica* L.)

- Warm Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Italian millet
- Low water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 inch
- Crude protein: hay 15%
- C:N ratio: 44
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)



Pearl Millet

(*Pennisetum glaucum* L.)

- Warm Season, grass
 - Annual
 - Upright plant architecture
 - Low water use
 - Poor salinity tolerance
 - Seeding depth: ½ – 1 inch
 - Crude protein: hay 13%
 - C:N ratio: 50
 - Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Self pollinator (wind)
- ◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*

Photos by Anne Verhallen
www.mccc.msu.edu



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Warm Season Grass

Proso Millet

(*Panicum milaceum* L.)

- Warm Season, grass
 - Annual
 - Upright plant architecture
 - Medium water use
 - Poor salinity tolerance
 - Seeding depth: 1 inch
 - Crude protein: hay 10%
 - C:N ratio: leaf 12-16, stem 12-35, root 17-26
 - Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Self pollinator (wind)
- ◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*



Grain Sorghum

(*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench)

- Warm Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Sorghum-sudan grass
 - *Grain sorghum and sudan grass were formerly separate species that have been combined. They are separated in the chart due to different plant attributes.*
- Medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
- Crude protein: hay 7%, stover 5%, grain 10%
- C:N ratio: leaf 11-17, stem 10-27, root 22-30
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Stress conditions that limit growth (e.g., drought, frost) can contribute to prussic acid accumulation in leaves

◆ [View table for known crop sequence effects](#)



Sudan grass

(*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench)

- Warm Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Alternate name: Sorghum-sudan grass
 - *Grain sorghum and sudan grass were formerly separate species that have been combined. They are separated in the chart due to different plant attributes.*
- Medium water use
- Fair salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: 1 inch
- Crude protein: hay 7-11%, silage 6-17%
- C:N ratio: 48 - 63
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Rated 'Excellent' at nutrient scavenging
- Self pollinator (wind)
- Stress conditions that limit growth (e.g., drought, frost) can contribute to prussic acid accumulation in leaves
- Known alleopathic effects on annual ryegrass



Teff

(*Eragrostis tef* (Zuccagni) Trotter)

- Warm Season, grass
- Annual
- Upright plant architecture
- Medium water use
- Poor salinity tolerance
- Seeding depth: ½ inch
- Crude protein: 10-18%
- Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
- Self pollinator (wind)



◆ [Back to Cover Crop Chart](#)

Warm Season Grass

Corn

(*Zea mays* L.)

- Warm Season, grass
 - Annual
 - Upright plant architecture
 - High water use
 - Poor salinity tolerance
 - Seeding depth: 1 – 2 inches
 - Crude protein: grain 9-10%, stover 5%, silage 8-11%
 - C:N ratio: stalk 11-65, leaf 13-20, root 20-49
 - Forms arbuscular mycorrhizal associations
 - Self pollinator (wind)
- ◆ *View table for known crop sequence effects*

