

Table 1. Cereal and other grass cover crops

Cover Crop	Planting Date	Seeding rate lb/1000 sq ft	Spacing	Winter Kill	Seed Availability	Pros	Cons
Cereal Rye	Late Aug – Late Oct	2-3	Broadcast or 5" spacing	No	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigorous • Cold hardy • Germinate and establish in cool weather • Captures N • Produces lots of biomass • Roots improve soil structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to turn under in spring due to rapid growth • Breaks down slowly
Winter Wheat	Late Sept – Late Oct	2-3	Broadcast or 5" spacing	Seldom	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May decompose faster than rye • Covers quickly in the fall • Does not have rapid growth in Spring • Produces lots of biomass • Roots improve soil structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptible to disease and premature death if planted before late September
Spring Oats	Late Aug – Early Sept	2-3	Broadcast or plant in rows 5-7" apart	Susceptible	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early cover • Tolerate wet and heavy soils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptible to winterkill • Not very hardy
Spring Barley	Late Aug – Early Sept	2-3	Broadcast or plant in rows 5-7" apart	Occasional	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early cover • Tolerates drought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptible to disease and occasional winterkill • Not as hardy as rye
Winter Triticale	Late Aug – Late Oct	2-3	Broadcast or row spacing 8"	Seldom	Must be ordered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces more vegetation than cereal rye • Decomposes easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to find the seed locally • High price of seed
Annual Ryegrass	Late Aug – Mid Sept	.5-1	Broadcast	Seldom	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerates wet soil in winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to till in • Regrows readily after mowing • Potential for becoming a weed

Table 2. Legume Cover Crops

Cover Crop	Planting Date	Seeding rate lb/1000 sq ft	Spacing	Winter Kill	Seed Availability	Pros	Cons
Hairy Vetch	Late Aug – Early Sept	1.5 -2	Broadcast	Seldom	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good companion plant with cereal grasses • Fixes N 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Establishes slowly • Poor cover planted alone • Difficult to till • Can become weed
Common Vetch	Late Aug – Early Sept	1.5-2	Broadcast	Seldom	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to till in than Hairy vetch • Fixes N 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can become weed
Austrian Winter Peas	Early Sept – Late Sept	2-3	Broadcast	Occasional	Feed Store or garden center or seed catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixes N • Animals can be grazed on before turning in • Grown alone or mixed with cereal grain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not provide weed control; can be out competed in mild winters
Crimson Clover	Late Aug – Early Sept	.5-1.5	Broadcast or 1" spacing	Seldom	Must be ordered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixes N • Easy to turn • Less likely to establish as a weed • Good for undersowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not compete well with cereals • Slow growth • Does poorly in poorly drained soil, acidic, infertile soil
Fava Bean	Early Oct	2-3	6"-8" spacing	Seldom	Must be ordered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixes N • Fastest growing legume in fall and winter • Grown alone or mixed with cereal grain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot have too much growth in fall or it will become susceptible to winterkill