

Summer Cover Crop Seed Cost 2024

Cover Crop	Seeding Rate Range	Cost <i>(per acre at middle of seeding rate range)</i>
<i>Super Sugar DM Sorghum Sudangrass</i>	15-35 lbs. per acre	\$38.50
<i>Teff Grass Seed (coated)</i>	7-18 lbs. per acre	\$83.99
<i>Hybrid Pearl Millet</i>	10-15 lbs. per acre	\$53.92
<i>Iron Clay Cow Pea</i>	50-90 lbs. per acre	\$139.99
<i>Sunn Hemp</i>	10-20 lbs. per acre	\$95.63
<i>Mustard</i>	5-15 lbs. per acre	\$53.92
<i>Buckwheat</i>	30-80 lbs. per acre	\$98.99

Summer Cover Crop Options for Long Island, NY

The following cover crop information was extracted from the Northeast Cover Crop Council’s cover crop selection tool webpage.¹

Grasses

Sorghum Sudangrass

Sorghum bicolor x *Sorghum bicolor* var. *Sudanense*

Cover Crop Description

Also known as: Sudex, Sudax. Excellent summer grass choice. Plant in early summer; does not tolerate cool soils. Fast-grower that reaches 6-12 ft tall, big biomass potential in the presence of lots of soil N. Regrows well after mowing/grazing. Excellent subsoiler with thicker roots than most grasses. Excellent weed suppressor due to competition and allelopathy (caution if next crop is small-seeded). Good forage, but prussic acid and nitrate content can be a problem. Improved forage types available, cultivars may vary widely. Can produce large amount of biomass; mow or kill in a timely fashion. Can substitute forage sorghum or sudangrass. Mixes well with cowpea and sunn hemp to create a diverse warm-season mixture.



Seeding rate: 15 - 35 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 0.5 - 1.5 inches

Planting dates

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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Reliable establishment:
05/15-07/31

Teff *Eragrostis tef*

Cover Crop Description

A summer annual grass. Teff has a lower optimal temperature for growth, making it a good choice for regions such as coastal New England where summer temperatures rarely exceed 90°F. The extremely dense canopy effectively out competes weeds. Teff is easily mowed and soil-incorporated with walk-behind equipment. Teff can also be cut and dried as hay, unlike sorghum or sudangrass. Good soil moisture is essential during establishment, but once teff is established it is very tolerant of drought. Teff is generally free from disease and insect problems, and will tolerate humidity and waterlogged soil. If the field is to be used for a fall crop, the teff can be terminated by tillage and mowing. Teff is not suited to termination by rolling and crimping, as the stems are flexible and will not be crushed by the roller.



Seeding rate: 7 - 18 lbs/Acre/year of coated seed. Reduce seeding rates by 50% if using raw seed. Plant to a depth of no more than ¼ inch

Jan Feb March April May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

Reliable establishment:
05/15-07/31*

*Starting planting dates are estimated off of when local soils reach 65 degrees Fahrenheit, which is the North East Cover Crop Councils recommended earliest planting time.

Millet, Pearl *Pennisetum glaucum*



Cover Crop Description

Tall summer annual grass. Does best under hot conditions. Fast growing. Has regrowth potential, particularly when mowed/grazed high. Improved forage types available, cultivars may vary widely. Mix with cowpea, sunn hemp, and sunflower for a diverse summer mix. Tall varieties are very similar to sorghum-sudangrass except slightly lower biomass potential but still a good smother crop; better on acid and droughty soils; less allelopathy potential; less reputation for subsoiling; no prussic acid forage toxicity (but nitrates still a concern).

Seeding rate: 10 - 15 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 0.5 - 1 inches

Jan Feb March April May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

Reliable establishment:
05/15-07/15

Legumes

Cowpea

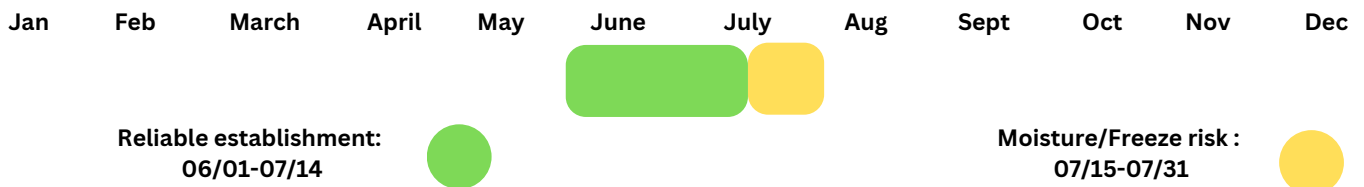
Vigna unguiculata



Cover Crop Description

Excellent summer annual legume. Needs heat to grow well. Very heat and drought tolerant once established, deep taproot, tolerates low fertility. Some shade tolerance. Grows fast, good biomass and forage producer, high N fixation potential, good weed suppressor. Extrafloral nectaries key for beneficial insects. Some suppression for problem nematodes. Low reseeding and weed risk. Inoculate with appropriate *Rhizobium* spp.; cross-inoculates with peanut, sunn hemp. Many varieties available: use forage or cover crop cultivars, with bush types for short mixes, vine- or runner- types for tall mixes. Less predation by deer and woodchucks compared to soybeans.

Seeding rate: 50 - 90 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 1 - 1.5 inches.



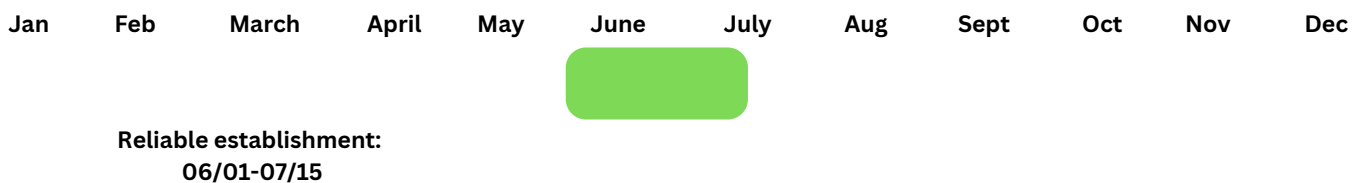
Sunn Hemp

Crotalaria juncea

Cover Crop Description

Tall tropical legume. Plant in early summer; does not tolerate cool soils. Good forage potential in areas with sufficient heat. Will tolerate high mowing (> 18"). Large N fixation potential. Effectively suppresses root-knot nematodes. Low weed risk, but with enough time can set viable seed. Becomes stemmy as it matures. Inoculate seed; cross-inoculates with cowpea. Certain cultivars contain alkaloids which are poisonous to livestock; check before feeding to animals. Spindly growth habit with narrow leaves seems to make it a better choice for mixes than in monoculture. Mix with sorghum-sudangrass, pearl millet, and sunflower for a diverse warm season mixture.

Seeding rate: 10 - 20 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 0.5 - 1 inches.



Non-Grasses and Legumes

Mustard

Brassica juncea

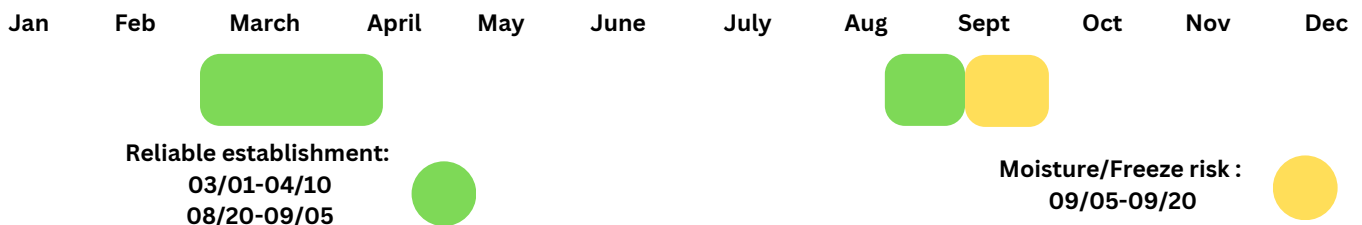
Cover Crop Description

“Mustard” encompasses several species including white/yellow mustard (*Sinapis alba*), Indian/brown mustard (*Brassica juncea*), and black mustard (*Brassica nigra*). Research and match varieties to your needs. Similar characteristics to other brassicas such as rapeseed/canola. Most commonly used for insect and disease suppression and adding diversity to mixes. Contains the most bio-toxic compounds, best brassica for bio-fumigation in zones with sufficient heat accumulation to support high biomass production (requires soil incorporation, etc.). Potential for fast fall growth and high biomass with good soil fertility. Well-documented for deep N scavenging in fall. Not known for subsoiling, some varieties may not have a taproot. Winter-hardiness, day-length response, other characteristics vary widely by cultivar.

If planted in the spring, may bolt (flower) before it can produce much biomass. Does not form associations with arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi. Host for insects of many related cash crop species used in vegetable crop production.



Seeding rate: 5 - 15 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 0.25 - 0.5 inches.



Buckwheat

Fagopyrum esculentum

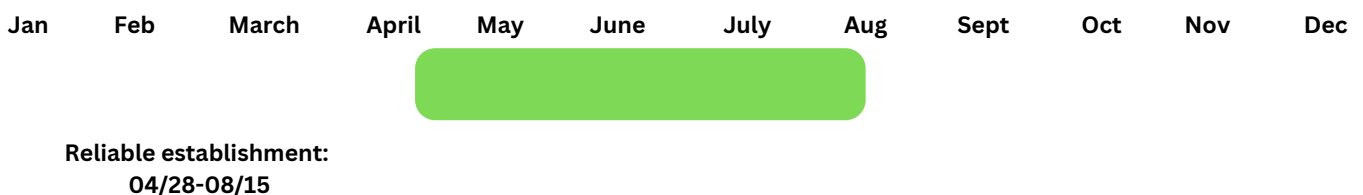
Cover Crop Description



Low-growing summer annual. Popular summer cover crop. Needs warm conditions, but very low tolerance for drought or high heat. Prefers light to medium textured well drained soils and performs poorly on heavy, wet, or compacted soil. Fine root system good for topsoil conditioning, but not subsoiling. Purported to be good for unlocking soil phosphorus (P), but that only works in calcareous soils. Tolerant of low pH (5.0). Excellent weed suppressor at high planting rates due to very fast growth (not allelopathy). Blooms and extrafloral nectaries excellent for pollinators and other beneficial organisms. High risk of reseeding if overmature: kill or mow within 7-10 days after first bloom. Sets seed faster than all other covers if reseeding is a concern, don't grow in mixes. Easy to kill.

Seeding rate: 30 - 80 lbs/Acre/year. At depth of 0.5 - 1 inches.

Planting Info



Resources

1) Cover crop selector offered by the Northeast Cover Crop Council
<https://northeastcovercrops.com/decision-tool/>

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