



**The Front Yard Nursery**

5801 Mother Lode Drive

Placerville (530) 626-3494

Open Daily

www.frontyardnursery.com

## **COVER CROPS & GREEN MANURE**

### **What is green manure and why plant it?**

Green manure is plant material that is grown for its nitrogen-fixing\* properties or to protect soil from erosion and compaction during winter rains, and to keep weeds down. The harvested plant material is used for compost to enrich the soil for spring planting. For larger garden areas that won't be dedicated to a winter harvest, planting green manure can help ready the ground for spring.

\*Nitrogen fixing is planting plants whose roots are colonized by certain bacteria that extract nitrogen from the air and convert or "fix" it into a form required for their growth. When the bacteria are done with this nitrogen, it becomes available to the plant itself. When you till the cover crop under, whether by hand or with a garden tiller, the nitrogen becomes available to your lawn or garden or landscape plants

### **What to plant: (most items can be purchased by the pound)**

**Fast growing nitrogen fixers:** Alfalfa, Clover, Vetch, Soybeans, Forage Pea, Fava beans (produces edible beans) Faba (bell beans)

**Good cover crops but not nitrogen fixing:** Wheat, Oats, Annual rye, Barley, Buckwheat, Safflower

### **How to plant:**

Remove old plant material (large roots, stems, fruit) from the area. Rake smooth and sow seeds at a high density rate. Rake into the soil. Add a layer on top if necessary to cover larger seeds. Water in well. Keep moist until germination (irrigate if it is not raining yet).

The easiest way is to compost in place. When the plants are in 80% flower, turn them under with a shovel preferably. (Note: if they go to seed, you will have to start the process all over again!) Rototillers work but do a lot of damage to the underlying soil structure when used repeatedly. It takes about a month for the plants to decompose this way if the area is kept watered (either from rain or weekly watering if there is no rain). Dry plant material takes much longer to decompose. You can also pull them up and toss them into a compost bin, then add compost back to the area when you plant.

To plant spring vegetables, put your new layer of organic matter/planting mix right on top and plant as usual. Less fertilizer should be needed to sustain your summer crop.

## **COVER CROP SEED, PASTURE AND EROSION CONTROL**

**WHITE DUTCH CLOVER: Perennial.** Used as a ground cover or lawn substitute. Grows 6-12" tall. Can be mowed.

All temperature zones. Sun or part shade. Fixes nitrogen in the soil. Fall or spring planting.

**1 lb. /400 sq. ft. for a lawn. 1 lb. /1000 sq. ft. for an orchard cover crop.**

**ROSE CLOVER (HYCON): Annual.** Attracts wildlife. Used for erosion control. Grows 6-12" tall. Pretty red flowers in spring.

Annual that will re-seed if allowed to. Plant in fall or spring.

**1 lb. /400 sq. ft.**

**STRAWBERRY CLOVER (O'CONNER): Perennial.** Low growing, 4-6" tall. Spreads by creeping stems and will reseed.

Can live in standing water for a month or longer. Does well in hot or cool weather.

**1 lb. /400 sq. ft. for lawn, ½ lb. /1000 sq. ft. for pasture.**

**TREE AND VINE CLOVER: Perennial.** Ground cover for orchard, vineyard, or lawn. Year round nitrogen production.

Plant any season except winter. 6-12" tall. **1 lb. /1000 sq. ft.**

**CRIMSON CLOVER:** Annual. Good winter annual for pastures. Highly palatable, good winter grazing.

**COMMON VETCH:** Attracts wildlife. Used for cover crop, pasture, or to attract wildlife. Annual cover crop that helps fix nitrogen in the soil. Plant in fall or spring. **1 lb. /1500 sq. ft. or 30 lb. /acre.**

**FABA BEANS (BELL BEANS):** Attracts wildlife. Cool season annual cover crop. Helps build organic matter and fix nitrogen in the soil. Plant October – February. **2-4 lb. /1000 sq. ft.**

**FAVA BEANS (LONG POD):** Attracts wildlife. Great cover crop. Primarily used as either green or dried beans, tastier than peas. Bushy plant 12-48" long and wide. Plant in spring. **4-5 lb. /1000 sq. ft.**

**BIOMASTER FORAGE PEA:** Cool season legume cover crop. Variety developed for maximum biomass. Two weeks earlier than Magnus Peas. Grows to 6' if supported. Plant in fall. **80-120 lb/acre or 3-5 lb/1000 sq ft. Raw seed, requires Pea-Vetch or Garden Combination inoculants.**

**Chicken Mix:** Blend of clovers, alfalfa, millet, flax, rye, and fescue. May increase Omega-3's in eggs. Plant in spring. **2-3 lb. /1000 sq. ft.**

**SOYBEANS** - Good cover crop, green manure. Plant in spring. **2-3 lbs/1000sq.ft**

**BUCKWHEAT:** Attracts wildlife. Great cover crop. Likes low fertility soil. Cool season, plant late summer or spring. Not frost tolerant. **1 lb. /1000 sq. ft. 70-90 days**

**WHITE OATS:** Cool season grass 24" - 5.' Matures in May/June. Excellent cover crop also great food for game, fowl, goats and cows. **1 lb. /1000 sq. ft.**

**SAFFLOWER** - Drought tolerant. Attracts wildlife. Plant in spring. **1 lb/1000sq.ft.**

**WHEAT** - Good winter cover when planted in fall. **1.5 lbs/1000sq.ft, 60 lbs/acre**

**BARLEY** - Excellent erosion control. Good cover crop. Good wildlife forage. Plant in fall. **1lb/1000sq.ft., 50 lbs/acre**

**ANNUAL RYE:** Mainly used for erosion control. Sow in fall before the first rain; the rain will aid in germination without irrigation. The grass will dry up and die as soon as rains cease and temperatures increase. May be used to over seed turf grass in the winter for a greener lawn. **3-5 lb. /1000 sq. ft., 50 lb. / acre for pasture, 6-10 lb. /1000 sq. ft. 100 lb./acre for erosion control.**

**FAR ROUGH MEADOW MIX:** Dual blend of hard fescue, creeping fescue, red chewing fescue and sheep fescue. For areas where little or no mowing is the rule. Slow growing and requires 40-50% less water. **5 lb. /1000sq. ft., 200 lb. / acre**

**DRYLAND PASTURE/EROSION CONTROL MIX:** 70% Gulf Annual Rye, 25% Turf-Type Tall Fescue, 5% Potomac Orchard Grass and 1% Other Crop. This is a pasture mix for use in areas that do not receive irrigation other than rain. This seed should be applied in fall or spring before winter rains cease. **1lb./800 sq. ft., 50 lb. / acre for pasture or 100 lb. / acre for erosion control.**

**UPLAND PASTURE MIX/NON-IRRIGATED HORSE MIX:** This is a pasture mix for use in areas that receives moderate irrigation other than rain. Annual rye will die off in spring. 60% Annual Rye, 25% Blando Brome, 10% Crimson Clover, 5% Ladock Alfalfa. **1lb. /800 sq. ft., 50 lb. / acre for pasture or 100 lb. / acre for erosion control.**

**IRRIGATED PASTURE / HORSE MIX:** AVAILABLE BY SPECIAL ORDER ONLY. Endophyte free,\* can be used for animal grazing. 25% Blando Brome, Potomac orchard grass, 10% Harding Grass, 5% Clovers and Annual Rye. This is a pasture mix for use in areas that receive irrigation other than rain. This seed should be applied in fall or spring before winter rains cease. **1lb. /800 sq. ft., 50 lb. / acre for pasture or 100 lb. / acre for erosion control. AVAILABLE BY SPECIAL ORDER ONLY**  
\*Endophytes are natural-occurring fungi within grasses that can be toxic to horses and other livestock.

RETAIL files/HANDOUTS/CVR CROPS AND GREEN MANURE