

Marion County SWCD Demo Garden Cover Crop Strategies

Cover Crop Mix	Rate L-N-H	Next Crop
Winterkill Cover Crop		
		Early crops (beets, carrots, lettuce, peas, spinach)
Oats	N	Plant in fall - Cover crop winterkills
Field Peas	L	Tarp for 6 weeks in March if weedy Rake CC mulch into pathway before planting crop Mulch up with compost Direct seed or transplant crop
Legume Cover Crop		
		Sweet Corn
Oats	L	Plant in fall - Cover crop overwinters
Hairy Vetch	H	Weed whack in late April - leave residue on bed Tarp for 2 weeks or until fully terminated Mulch up with compost for 100% soil cover Dibble and plant sweet corn
Legume Cover Crop		
		Kale (transplant)
Oats	L	Plant in fall - Cover crop overwinters
Crimson Clover	H	Weed whack in mid-April - leave residue on bed Mulch up with layer of newspaper and straw or compost Wait 10 days to ensure cover crop termination Transplant crop
High Biomass Cover Crop		
		Tomato, Pepper, Melons, Sweet Potato, Squash
Cereal Rye	H	Plant in fall to late fall - Cover crop overwinters
Crimson Clover	L	Scout and spot weed in spring
Hairy Vetch	L	Crimp in mid-April to mid-May (depends on crop timing) Tarp for 25 days or until fully terminated Broadfork if needed Leave residue on bed - Mulch up for 100% soil cover Transplant or make space in mulch for direct seed
Spring Cover Crop		
		Late beans, squash, melons
Oats	N	Plant in early spring (early April)
Field Peas	N	Crimp or weedwhack in late May or at least 3 weeks before crop
Flax	L	Tarp for 25 days or until fully terminated
Phacelia	L	Transplant or make space in mulch for direct seed
Summer High Biomass Cover Crop		
		Fall crop (transplants) or fall cover crop
Sorghum Sudangrass	N	Plant in summer after spring crop harvest
Sunn Hemp	N	Allow to grow tall or weed whack down to 1' and allow to regrow The mix often winterkills in October Terminate prior (crimp or weed whack) if planting fall crop Transplant crop
Summer Low Biomass Cover Crop		
		Fall crop or cover crop
Buckwheat	H	Plant in summer after spring crop harvest Buckwheat flowers in approximately 6 weeks Weed whack and tarp for 1 to 2 weeks to full terminate Allow 20 days after termination before planting small seeded crops

Results may vary based on soils, climate, and weed pressure.

For all mixes and strategies, scout for weeds often and spot weed.

If cover crop plots become too weedy to effectively spot weed, terminate early with tarp.

Broadfork before planting cover crop or crop if soil is compact or if beneficial to next crop (i.e. carrots)