Hairy Vetch
Vicia villosa

Season type: Winter legume

Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compaction reduction</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Attract beneficials</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residue persistence</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nitrogen scavenger</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erosion control</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>P &amp; K scavenger</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed control</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Forage quality</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nematode control</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; F=Fair; P=Poor/None

Seeding rate: 15 to 20 lb./acre drilled; 25 to 40 lb./acre broadcast
Inoculant: Pea-type/Vetch-type

Planting date: 15 to 45 days before killing frost

Production
Residue: 4,000 to 7,000 lb./acre
Nitrogen: 90 to 200 lb. N/acre

Surface residue
Provides lots of residue to protect soil surface and smother weeds. Decomposes relatively quickly due to the high nitrogen content.

Nitrogen fixation
A legume, hairy vetch produces about 100 pounds nitrogen per acre. To estimate pounds of nitrogen produced, cut and weigh fresh vetch top growth from a 4-ft x 4-ft area. Multiply by 12 pounds to estimate available pounds of N; or multiply by 24 to estimate total N.

Weed control
Vigorous early spring growth out-competes weeds. Hairy vetch produces compounds that inhibit weeds.

Not recommended when pest nematodes are present.

Prefers pH of 4.9 to 8.2 and well-drained soils. It is a good scavenger of phosphorus and is drought-tolerant.

Hairy vetch mixes well with grain cover crops. A mixture will provide better weed control and longer-lasting residue.

Adapted from Managing Cover Crop Profitably 3rd Edition

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