

Hairy Vetch

Vicia villosa



Season type: Winter legume

Uses

Compaction reduction	F	Attract beneficials	E
Residue persistence	F	Nitrogen scavenger	F
Erosion control	G	P & K scavenger	G
Weed control	G	Forage quality	G
Nematode control	F		

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

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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 is a good soil conditioner that increases water infiltration and storage.

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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