Sunn Hemp
*Crotalaria juncea*

**Season type:** Summer legume

**Uses**

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<th>Feature</th>
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<td>Residue persistence</td>
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E=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; F=Fair; P=Poor/None

**Seeding rate:** 20 to 40 lb/acre (with cowpea inoculant)

**Planting date:** at least 9 weeks before average frost

**Production**

- Residue: 5,000 or more lb/acre in 8-12 weeks
- Nitrogen: up to 120 lb N/acre

**Surface residue**

Rapid growth means sunn hemp can be planted after a summer crop and produce large amounts of biomass before being killed by frost.

**Nitrogen fixation**

A legume, sunn hemp can produce 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre in two to three months.

**Weed control**

Allelopathic compounds produced by sunn hemp inhibit weeds. Shading during growth and residue after frost-kill also provide good weed control.

Sunn hemp fiber is used for twine, rope, rug yarn, and paper.

**Native to India and Pakistan.** Heavily used in Brazil as a cover crop.

**Uses**

- Pest control: Shows tolerance and/or resistance to root-knot and reniform nematodes.
- Weed control: Allelopathic compounds produced by sunn hemp inhibit weeds. Shading during growth and residue after frost-kill also provide good weed control.
- Compaction reduction: Excellent
- Attract beneficials: Excellent
- Residue persistence: Good
- Nitrogen scavenger: Fair
- Erosion control: Very Good
- P & K scavenger: Fair
- Weed control: Excellent
- Forage quality: Poor/None
- Nematode control: Excellent

**Weeds**

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

**Seeds**

Seeds are expensive and limited, since sunn hemp is a tropical crop. Most seeds in USA are produced in Hawaii.

**P. Charles / USDA National Plant Materials Center**

Adapted from *Managing Cover Crop Profitably 3rd Edition*