

Iron Clay Cowpea

Vigna unguiculata L. cv. 'Iron Clay'



Photo by Pedro Acevedo-Rodriguez @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Season type: summer annual legume

Uses

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

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

Seeding rate: 40 to 50 lb/acre drilled; 80 to 100 lb/acre broadcast.

Inoculant: cowpea, lespedeza type

Planting date: soil temperature above 65°F to 9 weeks before frost

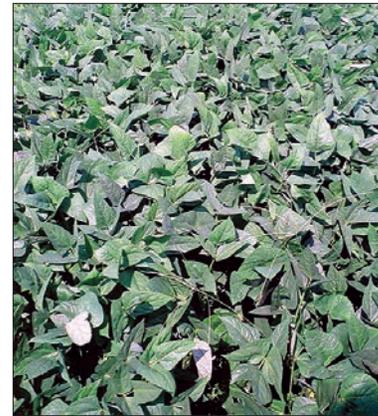
Production

Residue: 2,500 to 4,500 lb/acre

Nitrogen: 100 to 150 lb/acre

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Cowpeas originated in Africa and have been bred by farmers for thousands of years for different uses and situations. A popular cultivar for Southeastern cover crops is the *Iron Clay Cowpea*.



soft-winged flower beetle

Quick growth and establishment makes it excellent for weed suppression and erosion control.



honey bee

Iron clay peas reduce rootknot and soybean cyst nematode populations. Susceptible to reniform nematodes.

Extrafloral nectaries attract beneficial insects such as ants, predatory wasps, honeybees, lady bird beetles, and soft-winged flower beetles.

Tolerant of heat, drought, poor soils, and moderate shade. Deep tap root system finds water, scavenges phosphorus, and builds soil structure.



lady bird beetle

Reaches maturity (flowering) in about 7 weeks.

Good in mixtures with small grains, sorghum-sudan, buckwheat, & sunflower.



predatory wasp

Good nitrogen and biomass producer.



Adapted from *Managing Cover Crop Profitably 3rd Edition*



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