

CHOOSING A GREEN MANURE CROP

The first stage in deciding which species or mixture to grow is to determine your aims. These will then help you make the right choice. Sowing a mixture of plants will combine the benefits each offers.

SOIL TYPE

The soil type will influence the choice of green manure as some species are better suited to certain soils.

- Acid soils – most legumes do not grow well on acid soils
- Alkaline soils – sainfoin and lucerne thrive on soils with a higher pH and were traditionally grown on the chalky downs of Southern England.
- Neutral soils – most green manures thrive on soils with a neutral pH
- Free-draining soil – with this type of soil deep-rooting grasses like cocksfoot and/or tap-rooted legumes like sainfoin and red clover should be selected. Lucerne prefers a free-draining soil and will not grow under waterlogged conditions. Plentiful rainfall is fine, as long as the soil is free draining.

All green manures will add organic matter

AIM:

Improve soil structure

Fix N

1-12
months

1Yr
plus

1-12
months

1Yr
plus

Overwinter | Summer

Overwinter | Summer

Vetch
Grazing rye
Westerwolds ryegrass

Mustard
Sweet clover
Vetch
Red clover
Persian clover

Cocksfoot
Red clover
Chicory
Sweet clover
Sainfoin
Lucerne

Vetch
Sweet clover
Vetch
Red clover
Yellow trefoil
Crimson clover
Buckwheat
Fenugreek

Red clover
Sainfoin
Lucerne
Sweet clover
White clover

All green manures will add organic matter

AIM:

Improve soil & fix N

Lift N & control weeds

1-12
months

1Yr
plus

1-12
months

1Yr
plus

Overwinter | Summer

Overwinter | Summer

Grazing rye/
vetch mix

Red clover
Vetch
Sweet clover

Red clover
Sainfoin
Sweet clover
Lucerne

Grazing rye
Italian ryegrass
Westerwolds ryegrass
Phacelia

Mustard
Phacelia
Westerwolds ryegrass
Buckwheat

Perennial ryegrass
Cocksfoot