



Information on Cover Crops

What is a cover crop?

“Cover crops, also called “green manure,” are placeholder crops that you plant during the off-season and then cut down before planting a crop for harvest. Cover crops help build up soil nutrients and prevent erosion. Planting cover crops is an easy, inexpensive way to build better soil for gardening. Gardeners usually grow cover crops in fall and winter, and remove them in spring” (see pages 77- 78 from [Seed to Supper](#) guidebook).

Recommended cover crops for the fall-winter season:

- [Fava beans](#)
- [Austrian field peas](#)
- [Hairy Vetch](#)
- [Crimson Clover](#)
- [Alfalfa](#)

Other benefits:

Cover crops can reduce the growth of weeds because they are competing against each other for “sunlight, nutrients, and moisture” (see pages 16-17 from [An Educator’s Guide to Vegetable Gardening](#)).

Where to get it?

You can get seeds from your local garden stores such as [Cornell Farm](#), [Farmington Gardens](#), and more. [Yard and garden coupon | Metro \(oregonmetro.gov\)](#)

How to plant them:

Please read the instructions on your seed packet, and plant the seeds early enough before the cold weather arrives. “If vegetable crops are still growing in your garden, you can sow your cover crop seeds between the rows” (see pages 16-17 from [An Educator’s Guide to Vegetable Gardening](#)).

Here’s a video tutorial on how to plant them: [Cover Cropping: The LAZIEST Way to Improve Your Soil - YouTube](#) (Please go to **4:08** on the video)

Integrating Cover Crops:

“Plant cover crops after harvesting vegetables and removing garden debris. Cover crops are typically grown until they flower, at which point they are cut or mowed. Work the cut stems and foliage into the soil, and wait at least 2 to 3 weeks before planting vegetables” (see pages 16-17 from [An Educator’s Guide to Vegetable Gardening](#)).

Here's a video tutorial on how to integrate cover crop: [Cover Cropping: The LAZIEST Way to Improve Your Soil - YouTube](#) (Please go to **5:01** on the video)

Here are more links you can visit to help benefit your garden:

[Terminating Cover Crops to Prepare the Garden - YouTube](#)

[How to reap the benefits of winter cover crops | OSU Extension Service \(oregonstate.edu\)](#)

[Improving Soil Quality & Cover Crops | College of Agricultural Sciences \(oregonstate.edu\)](#)