

Cover Crops

What are cover crops?

Soil enriching crops planted during the fallow periods improve the soil fertility and promote and increase biodiversity in the agro-ecosystem.



Steps to cover crop your garden:

- 1st Choose the cover crop that fits your vegetable planting schedule, gardening goals, and gardening site
- 2nd Plant your garden: rake the area smooth, remove any large debris, plant seeds according to the particular cover crop, water lightly.
- 3rd Care: cover crops are low maintenance compared to most crops. Mowing over grasses actually increases root growth.
- 4th Killing: you must kill your cover crops before they set seed and the topgrowth gets out of control. You can mow them and incorporate them into the soil

After turning cover crops, wait 2-3 weeks before planting vegetables!

Benefits of cover cropping!

- Protects the soil from wind, rain, and melting snow
- Improves soil structure by creating channels to increase aeration, water infiltration, soil permeability
- Feeds beneficial soil critters
- Adds nutrients to the soil – legumes fix N in their root system
- Suppresses weeds – outcompete for light, moisture, nutrients, and space
- Attract beneficial insects like bees & ladybugs
- Increase crop yields and decrease fertilizer costs
- Prevents soil erosion – roots provide soil stability



Common Midwest Cover Crops

Legumes	Grass	Erosion Control	Block Weeds
Crimson & red clover, hairy vetch	Barley, ryes, Sudan grass	Barley, ryes, white clover	Buckwheat, oats, rye, wheat