

Legume
Cowpea
Vigna unguiculata



PLANT HARDINESS ZONE 5 DATASET

COVER CROP DESCRIPTION

Excellent summer legume. Needs heat to grow well. Very heat and drought tolerant once established, deep taproot, tolerates low fertility. Some shade tolerance. Grows fast, good biomass and forage producer, high N fixation potential, good weed suppressor. Extrafloral nectaries key for beneficial insects. Some suppression for problem nematodes. Low reseeding and weed risk. Inoculate with appropriate *Rhizobium* spp.; cross-inoculates with peanut, sunn hemp. Many varieties available: use forage or cover crop cultivars, with bush types for short mixes, vine- or runner- types for tall mixes. Less predation by deer and woodchucks compared to soybeans.



Cowpea - NancyLeeAdamson [2020]



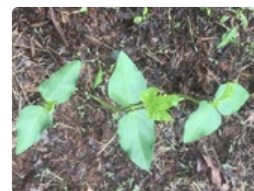
Cowpea - Ackroyd [2020]



Cowpea - Salon [2020]

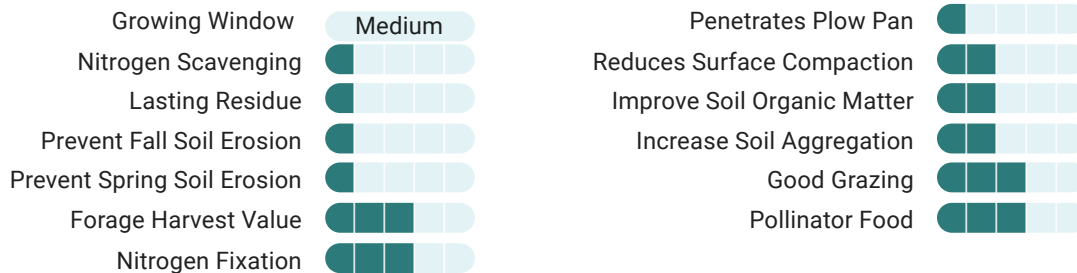


Cowpea - Ackroyd [2020]

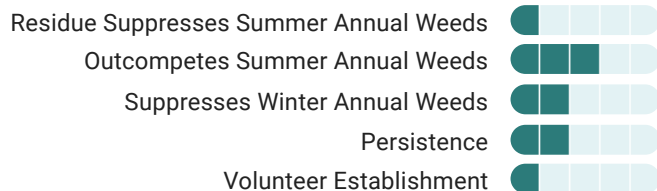


Cowpea - Ackroyd [2020]

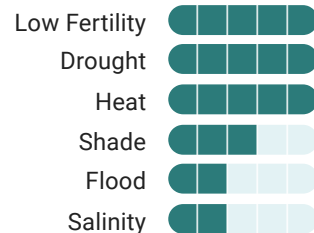
GOALS



WEEDS



ENVIRONMENTAL TOLERANCES



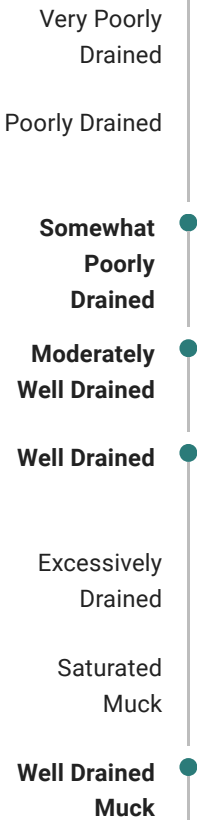


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Growth Traits

Duration	Annual
Zone Use	Emerging
Shape And Orientation	Semi-Erect
	Climbing
Dry Matter (Lbs/A/Yr)	1000 - 3200
Soil Texture	Fine
	Medium
Soil pH	6 - 8
Soil Moisture Use	Medium
Hessian Fly Free Date?	No
Nitrogen Accumulation (Lbs/A/Yr)	40 - 80
Ease Of Establishment	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Establishes Quickly	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Early Spring Growth	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Flowering Trigger	Plant Size
Root Depth	Deep
Inoculant Type	Cowpea
	Lespedeza

Soil Drainage



Planting

Seeds Per Lb	3600
Seed Price Per Lb	\$ \$ \$
Base Seeding Rate (Lbs/A)	50 - 50
Drilled Depth	1" - 1.5"
Can Aerial Seed?	No
Can Frost Seed?	No
Min Germination Temp (°F)	58

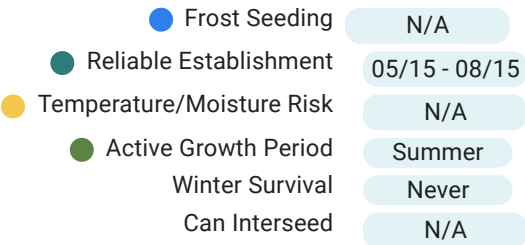
Termination

Tillage At Vegetative	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Tillage At Flowering	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Freezing At Vegetative	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Freezing At Flowering	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Chemical At Vegetative	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Chemical At Flowering	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Mow At Flowering	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Roller-Crimp At Flowering	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>



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Planting and Growth Windows



Extended Comments

Forage and Grazing: Grazers use in mixes as a summer rotational grazing crop. Good for forage harvest and grazing in areas with enough heat to allow it to put on biomass. Needs heat to suppress summer annual weeds, best in hardiness zones 5b and warmer.

Weeds: Less competitive against summer annual weeds in northern hardiness zones.

Pollinators: Has an extra-floral nectary that is attractive to pollinators and beneficial insects. Cowpea does not need to be in active flowering for pollinators to access this extra-floral nectary.

Nematodes: Host for sting and stubby root nematodes; moderately resistant to root-knot nematode.

References & Resources

Cover Crops and Green Manures, University of Vermont Extension
Cover Crops and Green Manures (New England Vegetable Management Guide), University of Massachusetts Extension
Choosing Cover Crops, University of Massachusetts Extension
Using Green Manures, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association