

# Custom Blend Cover Crop Seed

*Grown, cleaned and bagged in Oregon!*

Cover cropping is the practice of planting winter or post-harvest seed mixes to prevent erosion and build soil quality. Cover cropping has become a “best practice” in most cropping systems. OVS agronomists have been experimenting with various seed combinations in the Willamette Valley over many years to come to a list of standard recommendations. However, we respect that not all farmers have the same intents or conditions for cover crops, so in addition to our own blends, we feature single varieties and can produce custom blends.



- Control soil erosion
- Suppress weeds
- Build organic matter
- Encourage microbial activity
- Attract beneficial insects
- Add nitrogen
- Accumulate biomass & nutrients
- Conserve moisture
- Improve soil structure
- Enhance traction

The notion of cover crop seeding began with the concern to conserve soil from wind and water erosion; this is still a major value of doing so. But we’ve also learned that cover crops (particularly plantings of diverse species) build soil quality. Soil is composed of weathered parent material (rock), air, water, microbes (primarily bacteria and fungi) and other soil fauna, decaying organic matter and plant roots. When plants photosynthesize they pump carbohydrates out through their roots to feed soil microbes. The microbes in turn solubilize elemental nutrition (minerals) from the rocks and organic matter for the plants to uptake. The plants combine these minerals with the carbohydrates they create to build more complex carbohydrates and proteins to build new cells. When soil lies fallow without growing plants, this nutrition cycle is disrupted and soil begins to go dormant. Cover crops keep nutrients cycling and microbial populations healthy.

When cover crops are mowed or disked the plant matter (or biomass) is converted to organic matter and ultimately, through biological decomposition, it becomes humus. Humus is the most important catalyst in the soil; sustaining all other biological and chemical processes. Most farmers consider only the above ground biomass, but the root mass also breaks down creating organic matter, releasing nutrients and leaving pathways for air, water, worms and other soil fauna to move through the soil.

## **Each component of our seed mixes has a specific purpose, for example:**

**Oats:** The best nurse (companion) crop for legumes. Fibrous roots to 1.5 meters. Rapid germination in the fall. In the spring, oats pick up the nitrogen fixed by the legumes and grow rapidly. Some times we’ll substitute cereal rye or wheat if oat prices are high.

**Crimson clover:** Produces lots of flower nectar, attracts pirate bugs (*Orius tristicolor*) that eat thrips and other pests, nitrogen fixer, good P and K accumulator, tolerates low pH soils, deep taproot (1 meter). We sometimes substitute red or white clover, again depending on pricing.

**Winter peas:** Excellent biomass and nutrient accumulator, but shallow rooting, attracts lady beetles, nitrogen fixer.

**Oregon vetch:** Excellent biomass accumulator and insectary, up to 4% nitrogen fixer, tolerates low pH, deep taproot (1.5 meter).

In nurseries and some other cropping systems, growers often prefer to use single species or two species in tandem, some of the popular choices are: barley, oats, annual rye grass, crimson clover, winter peas, buckwheat, mustard, sudan grass, sunflowers, marigolds or corn. We offer some of these seeds in our standard stocking, but we can obtain and/or have most custom blended for you; please ask for a quote (*minimum quantity may apply*).

There are many considerations and/or limitations in cover cropping. One species or one mix isn't suited to all intents or soil conditions. Some species have allelopathic (inhibiting) properties toward related or competing species, we've taken this into consideration in the blends we offer. Other mixes are tolerant or intolerant (as the case may be) of various pH ranges, drainage or lack thereof, competition, compaction, etc. We are always learning.

Another function of cover crop is to simply improve traction during harvest or winter farming functions. For western Oregon, historically the best choices have been blends of perennial rye and fescue grasses.

Field conditions vary and there is more than one way to produce the result you are looking for. Our agronomists are available to answer questions and help put a program together to best meet your needs.

	Name	Description	Size	Notes	Rate
<b>Erosion Control Biomass Covers</b>					
Stocking	Gardenway Green Garden Plowdown (replaces Biomass Builder)	35% CCT Triticale, 28% Peas, 25% Walken Oats, 5% Common Vetch, 5% Crimson Clover, 2% Annual Ryegrass.	50lb	Nitrogen fixing, erosion control, high biomass, plowdown.	100-120# per Acre
Stocking	Economy Biomass Builder	65% oats, 15% winter peas, 10% Oregon vetch and 10% crimson clover.	50lb	Nitrogen fixing, erosion control, high biomass, plowdown.	50-80# per Acre
Stocking	Annual Ryegrass	Annual Ryegrass	50lb	Good late planting choice. Will germinate in cool soils. Erosion control plowdown.	20-25# per Acre
Stocking	Oats/Peas	50% Oats (VNS), 50% Whistler Winter Peas.	50lb	Nitrogen fixing, erosion control, plowdown.	50-80# per Acre
Stocking	Oats	Oats (Cayuse)	50lb	Fibrous root structure, erosion control, plowdown.	25-50# per Acre

<b>Permanent Sod Covers</b>					
Stocking	Pathway Perennial Cover Crop (replaces Driverow)	60% Perennial Ryegrass, 20% Creeping Red Fescue, 20% Hard Fescue	50lb	Very durable turf, permanent cover mix for heavier soils.	25-75# per Acre
Stocking	Economy Contractor's Mix	33% Perennial Rye, 33% Gulf Annual Rye, 33% Creeping Red Fescue	50lb	Economical turf cover w/quick germination. Ideal for erosion control.	50-100# per Acre
Stocking	Forage Max All Purpose	40% Forage Tall Fescue, 30% Orchard Grass, 25% Tetraploid Perennial Ryegrass, 5% Tetraploid Annual Ryegrass	25lb	Suitable for pastures with or without animals. Wide variety of pasture grasses (components may vary based on availability)	50-100# per Acre

<b>Specialty Seed</b>					
Special Order	Crimson Clover	Crimson Clover	50lb	Nitrogen fixing, erosion control, colorful plowdown.	20# per Acre
Special Order	Biofumigant Brassicas	61% Radish, 13% N.Y. Turnip, 13% Winfred Brassica, 13% Hunter Brassica.	55lb	Biofumigation to control nematodes, pathogenic fungi & bacteria, high biomass, mineral accumulation, plowdown.	15# per Acre

**\*\*\*PRICING SUBJECT TO MARKET SUPPLY & CHANGE. COMPONENTS OF BLENDS MAY CHANGE DEPENDING ON AVAILABILITY.\*\*\***

OVS RENTS 3-PT. MOUNT, LANDPRIDE SEEDERS FOR \$200/DAY