



Why Grow Cover Crops?

A common practice in gardening is the use of cover crops between seasonal rotations. Often you will hear the terms “Green Manure” or “Living Mulches”. Occasionally, seasonal plants, open spaces and displays will be replaced with a seed grown cover crop such as crimson clover, buckwheat, alfalfa or sorghum. Most cover crops are annuals and will produce leaves and flowers for pollinators but are quickly turned into the soils before seed dispersal. Benefits of growing cover crops...

- Prevents erosion
- Improves soil structure
- Suppresses weeds
- Aids in eliminating pests & diseases
- Adds beneficial nutrients
- Filters excess waste during run-off
- Fixates Nitrogen (the process of converting atmospheric nitrogen and mixing it with bacteria to make it more available to your crops)

Buckwheat, *Fagopyrum esculentum*, is a quick growing annual ideal to sow in August when summer vegetables are nearing their end. Direct sow buckwheat and allow plants to flower before tilling into the soils. It makes a great transition plant to sow between summer and winter season vegetables.



Trifolium incarnatum, or crimson clover is best sown in fall or late winter. Direct sow and allow the plants to emerge, flower and set seed. Till into the soils as soon as the flowers are finished. This is an ideal plant to sow before growing the summer vegetable garden.