



Teff

Eragrostis tef

Teff, the staple grain crop in Ethiopia, is a warm-season grass useful for suppressing weeds with a high plant population. Teff also produces a fine plant structure that doesn't leave the soil clumpy for the next crop. Although buckwheat and sudangrass are the most common cover crop choices in the summer, teff holds some advantages over them. Teff tolerates dry conditions better than buckwheat or sudangrass. It also requires less maintenance: buckwheat must be controlled when it matures and sudangrass requires mowing. Teff needs minimal mowing and generally does not produce seed, so volunteers are not an issue.



<i>Land preparation</i>	Use a firm seedbed, as with alfalfa, so that the tiny seeds stay near the surface. You should be able to walk on the soil without creating footprints. The soil needs 40-60 lb/ac nitrogen, ^{1,2} so follow a high-nitrogen vegetable or manure application.
<i>Seeding rate</i>	5-8 lb/ac raw seed or 8-10 lb/ac coated seed. ¹ Use the higher rate if moisture is uneven. Teff has tiny seeds, about 1.3 million/lb. Use Brillion seeder or broadcast followed by roller to press seed into soil. Use a light vehicle for planting because passes will be close together. Plant at a depth of 1/8-1/4 inches. Teff needs frequent light rain to emerge quickly.
<i>Seeding date</i>	June - July. ²
<i>Seed sources</i>	King's Agriseeds, PA, Hankins Seed, OR. Approximately \$3-4/lb. Seedway provides coated seed for \$4/lb. For cover cropping, the available varieties are similar. ^{3,4}
<i>Maintenance</i>	Mow to 3-4 inches every 7-8 weeks so that it doesn't go to seed.
<i>Control</i>	Winter-kills. ²
<i>Tips</i>	Roll or pack before seeding. If broadcasting, check to see how far the seeds are going. Seedlings are relatively drought tolerant after 3 weeks. Teff is used to make high-quality hay. ² One cutting can be taken in late summer.

References:

¹Target Seed Co., 2008. Tiffany management guide. 28 pp

²Hunter, M., Pete Barney, Tom Kilcer, Jerry Cherney, Joe Lawrence and Quirine Ketterings. 2007. Teff as emergency forage. Cornell Cooperative Extension. Agronomy Fact Sheet No. 24.

<http://nmisp.css.cornell.edu/publications/factsheets/factsheet24.pdf>

³Cal/West Seed Co. variety trial, Salem WI 2007. My source is Forage First Teff guide:

http://www.foragefirst.com/stellent/groups/public/documents/web_content/ecmp092296.pdf

⁴Norberg, S., R. Rosenberg, B. Charlton and C. Shock. 2008. Teff, a new warm season annual grass for Oregon. Oregon State University Extension Fact Sheet EM8970

Disclaimer

This fact sheet reflects the current (and past) authors' best effort to interpret a complex body of scientific research, and to translate this into practical management options. Following the guidance provided in this fact sheet does not assure compliance with any applicable law, rule, regulation, or standard, or the achievement of particular discharge levels from agricultural land.

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For more information



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Horticulture Extension
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