



# Triticale as a Cover Crop

Using triticale as a cover crop is similar to using rye—in terms of seeding rate and application—but triticale is a little lower in lignin content and later heading than rye. Like rye, triticale also makes an excellent spring emergency forage.

Use the same seeding rates as a rye monoculture—56-60 lbs/A at the low end and 220 lbs/A at the high end. 100-150 lbs/A is the most typical.

In a mix with legumes or annual ryegrass, use 20-30 lbs/A of triticale.

With earlier fall planting dates, a lower seeding rate can be used, since there will be more time for tillering and root growth. With a late planting date, beyond mid-fall, you will need to compensate for the reduced growth time with more plants.

**Seeding rate depends on your farm goals.** Seed at the high end seeding rate if you are planning to roll it down as a mulch mat.

The amount of triticale to use in a mix depends on how much biomass you want. More triticale means increased nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration, while a higher proportion of legumes means better nitrogen fixation. Lowering the triticale seeding rate allows other species in the mix, especially legumes, to express themselves better.

Common overwintering legumes to mix with triticale include crimson clover, hairy vetch, medium red clover, and field peas.

**The seeding rate also depends on when you plan to terminate the cover crop in the spring, and what components are in the mix.**

For an earlier spring plowdown, favor small grains in the mix, and use a higher seeding rate. This will help maximize nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration in a short time. For a very early plowdown, eliminate the legume, since it won't have time to become a significant part of the mix and won't be cost-effective.

For a green manure, plow down when the triticale is at least 8 inches tall.

If you intend to leave the cover crop until later in the spring, increase the legume component of the mix and let it grow into the spring (May-June is typical) for more nitrogen.

Triticale heads after rye and barley and before wheat and spelt. With less lignin than rye, it will put residue with a lower carbon-to-nitrogen ratio into the soil, which will break down faster.

## At A Glance

- Winter hardy, good growth in colder temperatures
- Catch crop used to prevent leaching of excess soil nitrogen.
- Long lasting residue cover in conservation tillage systems
- Can be cut or grazed as a forage at boot stage
- Soil builder
- Weed suppression and erosion control
- Works well in a mix with legume

## Best Uses

Winter cover crop, grazing, haylage, baleage,

## Establishment

**Planting Dates:** Through the end of October throughout most of Pennsylvania

**Seeding Rate:** 60-200 lbs/A

**Seeding Depth:** 1/2" - 3/4" deep



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