

Lockwood Seed & Grain Cover Crop



About Cover Crops

Soils are living systems and with the help of winter cover crops farmers will benefit and protect the soil. Composed of annual plant mixes of grains and legumes, they physically protect it from erosion from rain, wind, and running surface water; they out-compete weeds; and their roots reach down several feet into sub-soil to break up compacted soil and bring nutrients to the top layer of soil.

Increased
Soil Organic
matter

Improved
Microbial
Activity

Improved
fertilizer
Utilization

Tilling soil increases the oxygen in the soil and causes rapid decomposition of the organic matter, preventing its beneficial buildup. In non-tilled soils, organic matter levels build up quickly, creating a sponge for water and enhancing fertility. Non-tilled soil has many microenvironments where diverse organisms thrive. Tilling homogenizes soil and reduces diversity of soil organisms, creating a boom-and-bust cycle of nutrients. No-till establishes a steady nutrient stream and enhances healthy earthworm populations, and in turn, those soil organisms create nutrients.

How does no-till work with cover-crops? Cover crops are sown in autumn and grown over winter. Mowing is done two to four weeks prior to crop-planting in spring, and then the clippings are raked over the beds and covered with a 1" layer of compost. Those undisturbed clippings and roots decompose quickly. To plant the crop, hoes are poked into the compost layer and new seedlings are firmed into the holes. The decomposing plant matter and added compost help protect the soil from the sun, limit evaporation of water, and keep the soil cool in hot weather. As the compost layer atop the soil feeds the crop, it prevents most weed seeds from germination thus limiting weeds and lowering the competition for water.



Work with Us



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