BASIC EARTH
WORKING WITH NATURE

HAIRY VETCH

Vicia villosa

Hairy Vetch is a good cover crop choice where spring forage production and nitrogen contribution are desired. Though fall-planted Hairy Vetch may not have evident top growth, strong root development continues over the winter. Growth accelerates in the spring when it can reach 12 feet in length. This viny growth can be very beneficial, as it smothers weeds and is a great nitrogen contributor; however, it can also be a challenge, as it is sometimes difficult to manage with hay cutting equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

FERTILITY IMPROVEMENT
Hairy Vetch supplies a generous amount of nitrogen which is readily available to the following cash crops. It can provide enough nitrogen for many vegetable crops and significantly decrease the amount of nitrogen fertilizer needed for corn or cotton production. It also increases cash crop nitrogen use efficiency, paving the way for higher yields. Hairy Vetch is also an excellent scavenger of phosphorus.

EROSION CONTROL
Hairy Vetch reduces wind and water erosion by covering the soil with plant material. By having the soil held in place during the fall, winter, and early spring, erosion is greatly reduced.

WEED SUPPRESSION
Aggressive spring growth of Hairy Vetch helps suppress weeds by out-competing them for sunlight and moisture. Residue remaining after burn-down is also very effective at shading the soil as it decomposes.

FORAGE ENHANCEMENT
Hairy Vetch is a prolific forage producer in the spring, producing sprawling vines up to 12 feet in length . It can be grazed or cut for hay, haylage or silage.

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USES

When planted ahead of an early summer crop, Hairy Vetch provides nitrogen and an organic mulch. Hairy Vetch makes a great cover crop following winter wheat harvest in mid-summer. It may winterkill in some of the coldest climates, but usually survives to regrow in spring. It is widely adapted and tolerant of diverse soil types, low fertility, and cold winter weather, making it the most widely used of the winter annual legumes. To maximize nitrogen fixation and biomass production, do not terminate too early in the spring.

Cereal rye and hairy vetch work well together. The result is a "hybrid" cover crop that recycles nutrients in the soil, fixes nitrogen, smothers weeds, controls erosion, and delivers a more even distribution of nitrogen over a longer period than Hairy Vetch alone.

Hairy Vetch needs a bit of moisture to establish and to resume growth in the spring, but is otherwise tolerant of dry conditions.

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

	MONOCULTURE	IN MIXES
SEEDING RATE:	15-20 lbs/acre drilled 25-30 lbs/acre broadcast	10-15 lbs/acre drilled 15-20 lbs/acre broadcast
PLANTING DEPTH:	1/2 - 1 inch	
INOCULANT:	Vetch/Pea Rhizobium, or 'Type C'	
IDEAL SOIL:	Tolerant of a wide variety of soils, including poorly-drained soils and low pH (5.5 or lower, though 6.0 - 7.0 is ideal).	

MIXES WELL WITH: OATS, CEREAL RYE, ANNUAL RYEGRASS, AND DAIKON RADISHES

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