



COWPEAS

Producers may know that cover crops benefit the soil and agricultural operations, but do they know the benefits of each species? Each month a different cover crop species will be highlighted to provide producers with information needed to successfully grow cover crops or alternative forages on their operation.

AT A GLANCE

- Plant between beginning of June and end of August
- Great for producing high volumes of forage for livestock
- Can improve soil by reducing compaction, adding nutrients, and even helping reduce weeds
- Commonly known as black eyed peas

PLANTING DETAILS

- Should be planted when air and soil temperatures are above 65, between the beginning of June and end of August
- Seeding rates will vary greatly based on intended use and seeding method
- Minimum seeding rate should be 30 lbs/acre
- Great to plant after early harvested crops with livestock

ABOUT COWPEAS

- Annual legume that originated in Africa
- Also commonly known as black eyed peas
- Nutritious in a human diet but often used as livestock feed throughout the Upper Midwest
- High-yield forage, comparable to alfalfa in digestibility, but trypsin inhibitors limit the utilization of protein

BENEFITS

Reduce Compaction, Provide Nutrients

The taproot of legumes can help reduce the impact of compaction and can also provide nutrients to the soil.

Forage & Weed Control

Produces high volumes of forage for livestock, comparable to alfalfa in digestibility; large biomass helps shade out unwanted weeds

Nitrogen

Cowpeas will fix an average of 130 lbs of nitrogen per acre and upwards of 300 lbs/acre.



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