

RAPESEED

COVER CROP FACT SHEET FOR IOWA

Rapeseed (*Brassica napus*) is a fast-growing brassica often used in cover crop mixes to help fight soil compaction, capture residual nitrogen, and help with water infiltration.



Cisco Farm Seed

Identifying Features

- » Kidney-shaped cotyledons
- » Leaves with distinct veins
- » Undulated leaf
- » Leaves are waxy and hairless

Cultural Traits

- » Cool-season/winter annual brassica
- » Minimum germination soil temperature: 41° F
- » Cold temperature tolerance: 0° F
- » Seeding date: Early August to Mid September*

Planting Information*

- » **Drill/Plant** at ¼ - ½ inch (3 lbs./acre PLS**)
- » **Broadcast** (3 lbs./acre PLS)
- » **Aerial** (4 lbs./acre PLS)

*Planting information from Midwest Cover Crop Council (midwestcovercrops.org). Refer to local NRCS office recommendations (Iowa Field Office Technical Guide, Section 4, 340 Cover Crop) for seeding dates and rates pertinent to location specific financial assistance program requirements.

**Pure Live Seed

Additional planting information:

- » ~160,000 seeds/lb.
- » Rapeseed and canola are the same species, but their oils have different chemical makeups. Do not use glyphosate-resistant varieties.
- » Broadcasting without incorporation is less dependable than drilling.



Rapeseed Seed



Rapeseed sprouts



Rapeseed leaves in a mix.



Rapeseed popping through the soil.

C:N (Carbon:Nitrogen) Ratio

- » Rapeseed 12:1 to 37:1

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Rapeseed sprouts through the soil.



Rapeseed blooms yellow in a cover crop mix.

Performance

Dry matter = 1,000 - 2,500 lbs./acre per year
(Biomass quantity is dependent on planting and termination dates and precipitation.)

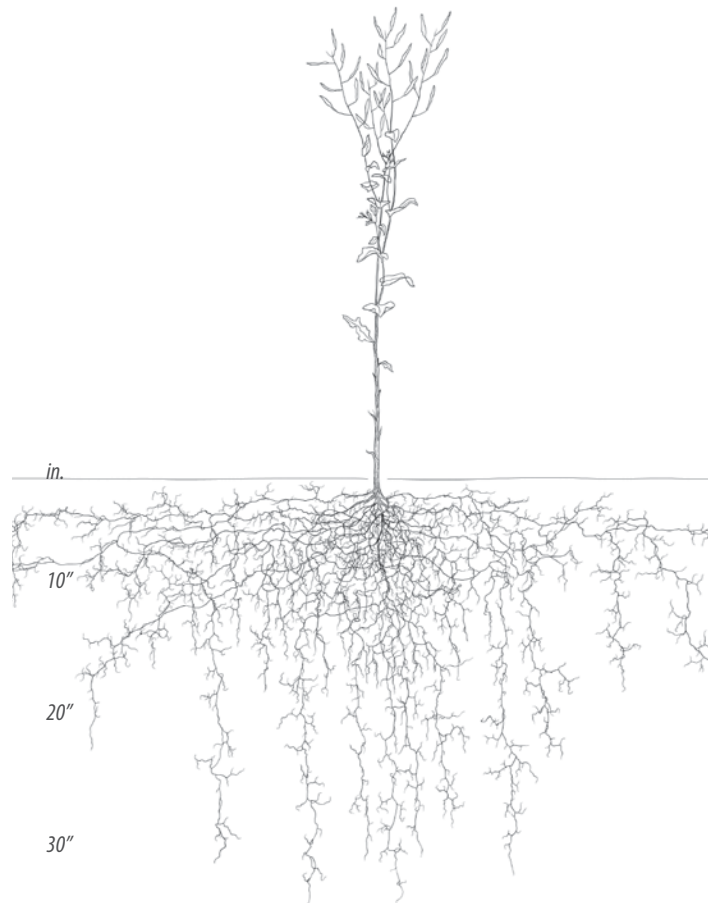
Performance Ratings

» Cash crop interseed (<i>early vegetative</i>)	Good
» Cash crop overseed (<i>late seed fill</i>)	Good
» Grazing quality	Fair
» Mechanical forage harvest	Poor
» Nitrogen fixer	NA
» Nitrogen scavenger	Good
» Weed suppression	Good
» Compaction fighter	Good
» Erosion control	Fair
» Lasting residue	Fair
» Quick grower	Very good
» Drought tolerance	Fair
» Low fertility tolerance	Poor
» Shade tolerance	Poor

Additional Considerations

- » Should not be used in rotations with other brassicas.
- » May help reduce rhizoctonia in some cropping systems.
- » May become a serious weed if allowed to go to seed.
- » Does not tolerate ponding.
- » Rapeseed produces a natural herbicide called glucosinolate, which reduces weed germination.

Rapeseed Plant and Root Structure



Drawing provided by Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (ccsin.org)

This fact sheet is a collaborative effort of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to provide cover crop options and information for Iowa landowners.