



TECHNICAL BULLETIN 91-1

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SUBJECT: Mulching Methods – Temporary Cover Plants

Temporary cover plants can be seeded after construction to decrease soil loss, increase organic matter, reduce weed invasions, and conserve moisture until permanent perennial vegetation can be seeded. Temporary cover crops are rapidly growing plants, usually small grains or annual grasses, that provide quick cover and soil protection for 6 to 24 months. Below is a list of temporary cover species and general information about their planting requirements, contact the local Soil Conservation Service of Extension Service office.

	Annual Precipitation Needed (inches)	Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)*	Germination Temperature °F)
Winter Cover			
Winter wheat	16+	35	40-50
Wheat-wheatgrass hybrid	14+	20	-
Annual rygrass	13+	20	-
Winter rye	12+	50	35-45
Summer Cover – Cool Season			
Spring wheats	16+	40	40
Barley	13+	40	38-60
Wheat-rye hybrid	13+	48	38
Summer Cover – Warm Season			
Sorghum	12+	8	60-70
Sudangrass	12+	25	60-65
Millet	11+	20	65-70

* Seeding rates should be reduced to ¼ when the species is used as a nurse or companion crop with native perennial plants.

Winter wheat

(*Triticum* spp.) is usually seeded in the fall and needs the cold winter climate to vernalize before seedheads are produced. However, plants that are spring-seeded provide a low-growing cover throughout the first year and can be used for almost tow growing seasons before seedheads develop.

Wheat- wheatgrass hybrid

(*Triticum x Agropyron*) is a cool season plant that provides good cover and extensive root growth. “Regreen” is a named cultivar with minimal volunteered seeds. It is short-lived (two to three years) and may experience winter kill in one year at higher

