

## Sowing & Growing Grazing / Forage Rye



Rye (*Secale cereale*) also known as grazing or cereal rye, is one of the most effective crops for reducing N leaching over the winter. It grows quickly in the autumn making it one of the best winter green manures. It will also give the earliest spring growth, typically used for early spring grazing. It is a short lived cover crop and is normally incorporated in March after an autumn sowing.

Grazing rye establishes very quickly and competes against weeds effectively. The residues have an allelopathic effect against germination of seed, inhibiting the establishment of weeds; however this can affect a following crop in reducing its germination. It is advised to leave 6 weeks before sowing the next crop.

**When to sow:** Grazing rye is usually sown in the autumn in order to establish over-winter cover. It has an advantage over legumes in that it will still grow successfully if sown in September or October.

**Sowing Rates:** 18 g/m<sup>2</sup> - 75kg per acre - 187.5kg per ha.

The sowing rate for cereal rye can be flexible depending on the scale it may be planted on. The above rate is robust and will create a dense cover, out competing weeds. This could be very useful in organic horticultural systems. The rate can also be reduced to make the sowing more economical on large arable areas. A more appropriate rate for this job could be as low as 25 - 35 kg per acre, while still providing a reasonable green cover.

**Sowing:** Rye is a larger seed and should be drilled to a depth of 2-3cm and rolled after sowing to increase soil to seed contact.

**Management:** Grazing rye may need topping or grazing in March or early April, for weed control or to prevent it flowering and becoming stemmy. It will need a herbicide application or ploughing to terminate the crop reliably.

---

Date Posted: 20th January 2023