Cotswold Seeds Ltd
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Sowing & Growing: Vetch



Vetch (*Vicia Sativa)* also known as ‘tares’ is a very popular UK legume, providing a rapid fix of nitrogen. Vetch is extremely competitive against weeds forming a mat or carpet of vegetation as it establishes, helping to smother weeds and create dense ground cover.

It's important to sow winter hardy varieties of vetch if the aim is to leave in place over the winter. Traditionally used as an over-winter green cover and soil improver, it can also be grazed by livestock.

When to Sow: Generally sown in the autumn during September for over-winter cover. Of all the legumes it has one of the latest sowing windows in the autumn.

Sowing Rate: 7.5 g/m2 - 30kg per acre - 75kg per ha.

Vetches are large seeds so they must be sown at a robust rate to get a decent cover in the field. The sowing rate is variable depending on the budget and situation.

Preparation: The most successful results come from sowing into a newly prepared seedbed. Aim to cultivate the top soil to about 5cm, with a light cultivator or discs. The finished seedbed should be fine but firm, with no clods. Several passes with a cultivator may be needed to achieve this.

Sowing: Being a large seed, vetch should be sown at the depth of around 1-2 cm. The soil should be rolled after sowing to increase seed to soil.

Management: It’s best not to top vetch at all, as it does not recover well. Its growth is vigorous enough to compete against weeds without the need for cutting.

Being an annual, this crop is finished after flowering making it short lived. It often flowers then dies back after 6 months from a spring sowing. The plant will last longer during an autumn sowing due to it becoming dormant over the winter. Normally it will flower and die away in June/July the following year.

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