Cotswold Seeds Ltd
The Cotswold Business Village
Moreton in Marsh,
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Herbal Grazing Leys: Sowing & Growing

Suitable soils and optimum pH

Ideally suited to medium and light soil types with a pH of 6.0-8.0, although tailored options are available for heavier soils with a lower pH.

When to sow

Sow from March until early September, late autumn sowings should be avoided.

How to sow

Herbicide options for Herbal Leys are very limited, choose a site that has a low weed burden and aim to spend time controlling perennial weeds like docks and creeping thistle before sowing by creating several stale seedbeds or light cultivation.

Sow into a fine, firm seedbed after an application of FYM. These leys contain many small-seeded species and are best broadcast as this leads to more even plant distribution and reduce the risk of being sown too deeply. Great care must be taken if direct drilling these mixtures.

Once sown, roll immediately to ensure good soil-to-seed contact, it is advisable to roll twice after sowing to achieve maximum seed to soil contact.

Management

Graze lightly while the crop is establishing (usually 6-8weeks after sowing) to encourage tillering. Once growing well, rotationally graze allowing about four - six weeks for recovery and regrowth. Using electric fencing, ration an area per day (eg about half an acre for 100 cattle) but adjust this area to match growth and stock requirements. Over-grazing will damage chicory crowns.

Surplus production from Herbal Leys can be made into silage, from year 2 onwards avoid delaying cutting silage after July as chicory stems can become woody.

Nutrient requirements

No N is required, P and K should be maintained at ADAS Index 2.

Yield potential

Yields of 13t DM/ha for the Herbal Ley and 10t DM/ha for the Chicory Ley should be achieved.

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