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Sowing & Growing Tillage Radish

Tillage radish *(raphanus sativus)* is a short term annual brassica. It has a deep rooting ability to break through compacted layers and plough pans, creating a better soil structure and improving drainage and air movement within the soil. This fast growing annual can compete well with weeds, smothering out emerging weed seedlings as it develops a thick green canopy in warm temperatures

This species does not fix nitrogen but it will mop up and hold any excess nitrogen in the soil and release it as it breaks down over time.

When to sow: Sow from April onwards. This quick growing species will produce a more significant taproot if allowed to grow during the spring and summer when the soils are warm. Be aware that excessively hot weather 6-8 weeks after sowing can cause plants to bolt and go to seed faster than normal.

If autumn sowing, aim to plant during mid to late August in warm soils to get the most growth before the weather gets cooler in the autumn.

Sowing Rates: 0.75 g/m2 - 3 kg per acre - 7.5 kg per ha.

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: This small brassica seed should be broadcast or drilled to a shallow depth (not more than 10mm) into a fine seedbed. The soil should be rolled after sowing to increase seed to soil contact.

Management: This species is not normally topped unless it is to be incorporated. Tillage radish will suffer from the same disease pressures as other brassicas. It is a hungry species so good soil fertility will encourage strong growth. It can also be affected by and is a potential host for club root.
Not a strong winter hardy species. Several nights of freezing temperatures will normally kill it off and if left over winter it may die away leaving the ground open to weed invasion.

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