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Sowing & Growing Spring Oats

Oats (*Avena sativa*) is a popular annual cereal crop and member of the grass family. Oats are often known as common oats, which can be used for human consumption and livestock feed. Oats may also be used as a component of a winter bird food mixture and as a soil improving crop, usually combined with other species.

Spring Oats as the name suggests are normally sown in the spring. They grow throughout the summer and usually die away in cold weather during the winter.

When to sow: Oats can be sown from early spring until autumn, spring oats will not normally survive the winter.

Sowing Rates: 12.5 g/m2 - 50kg per acre - 125kg 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: Drill at 2-3cm. Rolling after sowing is recommended

Management: Oats can be flailed or grazed and incorporated before the next crop. As some plants break down after incorporation, The root exudates can inhibit the germination of other nearby species This is known as allelopathy. While this can be a useful situation with regards to inhibiting weed seedlings, it may reduce the germination of the following crop, especially if it is a small seeded crop. To reduce this effect a period of 6 weeks should be left before sowing the next crop.

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