

Common vetch can be used as a cover crop in the Piedmont, Mountains, and Ridge & Valley. It is less winter hardy than hairy vetch. Vetches generally produce more biomass and N than crimson clover. However, vetches can become weeds in subsequent seasons since these are hard-seeded. Common vetch has less hard seed than hairy vetch. Uncoated (raw) vetches work well and contain ~50% more seed per pound than coated versions.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Cahaba White	Earlier growth than common hairy vetch. Resistant to root knot and soybean cyst nematode.	Grow Your Own N: Legumes in Row Crop Systems

Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	1 - 2	Grow Your Own N: Legumes in Row Crop Systems
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	30 - 40	Use <i>Rhizobium leguminosarum biovar viciae</i> inoculant.
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	30 - 60	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

Termination Information

Information	Source
<p>Most vegetable farmers use mowing and incorporation for termination. Flail mowers provide the finest residue and most even distribution, but rotary mowers can be used. Small scale farmers can use weed-eaters on smaller beds. Vetch can vine out and when present at high levels can cause issues with wrapping around mowers during termination if the cover crop is too robust. Residue should be incorporated as soon after mowing as possible. Leave at least 2 weeks for residue to decompose before planting. Legumes decompose quickly and most of the nitrogen is released within 1 month after incorporation. Decomposition is greater in moist, warm conditions. If the soil is dry then irrigation may be necessary. Cool soils conditions will lengthen time needed before planting.</p> <p>If using herbicides for termination, consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.</p>	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

Continue to next page...

Cultural Traits

Traits	Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	3,500 - 4,500	Grow Your Own N: Legumes in Row Crop Systems, Unpublished Literature Review in Piedmont – Gaskin
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	120 - 140	Grow Your Own N: Legumes in Row Crop Systems, Unpublished Literature Review in Piedmont – Gaskin
Life Cycle	Annual cool season legume	
Growth Habit	Prostrate viney	
Preferred Soil pH	6.0 – 7.0	
Relative Seed Cost (\$/acre)	\$\$	
Min. Germination Temp (F)	N/A	
Cautions	Moderate hard seed. Susceptible to <i>Sclerotinia</i> . Not a good choice for fields with a history of problems with <i>Sclerotinia</i> or for use before susceptible spring crop such as lettuce or crucifers.	Clemson University; University of Georgia

Sources:

Managing Cover Crops Profitably: <https://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books>

Mitchell, C.C. and J. Mosjidis. 2006 Grow Your Own N: Legumes in Row Crop Systems. Agronomy Series Timely Information Alabama Cooperative Extension S-05-06