ANNUAL RYEGRASS (*Lolium multiflorum*)

Annual ryegrass can be a good soil builder but it presents challenges for southern farmers due to its resistance to herbicides. It may be most useful in mixed row crop/grazing operations or grazing only operations.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Attain, Big Boss, Earlyploid, Fria (M), Lonestar, Nelson, Prine, Marshall, TAMTBO, Tetrastar, Winterhawk (M), Jumbo	Performed well on GA Statewide Variety Trials (high biomass) and are commercially available.	UGA Forages. UGA Statewide Variety Trials. Note: M indicates performs well in the Mountains.

Planting Information

Information		Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	0 - ½		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	10 - 20		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	20 – 30	Not recommended for overseeding dormant pastures.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

Termination Information

Information	Source
Annual ryegrass may be terminated by herbicides, mowing, and tillage. It may be difficult to terminate, and it is considered a weed in row crop operations. Annual ryegrass has developed resistance to many herbicides. Herbicides need to be used at the proper growth stage. Best results are during early bloom, before seed set. Mechanical termination should be during early bloom, before it sets seed. Mowing or heavy grazing alone will not kill ryegrass completely. Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably, Prostko – personal communication

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Cultural Traits

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	4,000 - 9,000		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	45 - 80		Understanding and Improving Forage Quality - UGA Bulletin 1425
Life Cycle	Cool season annual grass		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Growth Habit	Upright		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Preferred Soil pH	6.0 - 7.0	More tolerant of low pH than other cool season annual grasses.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Relative Seed Cost ($/acre)	$$		Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	40°		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Cautions	Annual ryegrass can be very difficult to terminate and has a very narrow window when herbicides are effective. Early varieties have higher risk of producing viable seeds if not managed properly. Consider feeding a high magnesium mineral when grazing. Cool season grasses and grains can contain inadequate levels of magnesium in early spring, which can result in grass tetany.		

Forage Traits

Information	Source
Annual ryegrass is one of the highest quality forages that can be grown in the South. It is usually planted for grazing and high-quality baleage or silage. Due to frequent rainfall and cool temperatures, it can be difficult to dry annual ryegrass down for hay in the late spring. Baleage or silage, harvested at the boot/early heading stage, are the preferred storage methods.	UGA Forages Virginia Cooperative Extension
Annual ryegrass can be either diploid or tetraploid. Generally, tetraploid varieties are taller plants with wider leaves and swards that are less dense.	Southern Forages, 5th Ed.
Annual ryegrass has a later grazing season than small grains and can be grazed until late May to early June in the Piedmont region. Some varieties may provide some late fall grazing if planted early into a prepared seedbed. Annual ryegrass is commonly seeded in mixtures with a small grains and/or clover.	

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Sources:

Baleage Production and Use: https://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/content/dam/caes-subsite/forages/docs/publications/Baled_Silage_Production_and_Use2.pdf

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

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center Annual Reports: http://swvt.uga.edu/2017/SM17/AP100-9-Rgs-forage.pdf

UGA Forages: https://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/species-and-varieties/cool-season/annual-ryegrass.html

UGA Statewide Variety Trials: https://swvt.uga.edu/ Note: recommended varieties change periodically based on new data.

Southern Forages. Donald Ball, Carl Hoveland, and Garry Lacefield.

Understanding and Improving Forage Quality. University of Georgia Extension Bulletin 1425: http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1425&title=Understanding%20and%20Improving%20Forage%20Quality

Virginia Cooperative Extension: https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/DASC/DASC-93/DASC-93.html