CEREAL RYE (*Secale cereale* L.)

Cereal rye is the workhorse small grain cover crop in the Piedmont, Mountains and Ridge & Valley. It is the most reliable winter small grain because of cold tolerance and consistent early season yields. It works well in integrated row crop/grazing systems and for winter grazing in pastures.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Wrens Abruzzi	Cheap, easily available, good biomass, few diseases.	UGA Forages. UGA Statewide Variety Trials.
Kelly Grazer III	Forage variety, high biomass.	UGA Forages. UGA Statewide Variety Trials.
Elbon	Elbon is a recommended variety from Georgia Statewide Variety Trials.	UGA Forages. UGA Statewide Variety Trials.
Bates RS4	Good performance in statewide variety trials.	UGA Forages. UGA Statewide Variety Trials.

Planting Information

Information		Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	¾ - 2		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	60 - 100	Higher rate may be needed in conservation tillage systems for sufficient biomass to suppress weeds in following cash crop.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	90 – 120	Not recommended for overseeding in dormant pastures. Can be broadcast over cash crops in row crop/grazing operations.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably; UGA Forages

Termination Information

Information	Source
Mowing, rolling & crimping, herbicides, tillage, high density grazing, and combinations of these practices can successfully terminate cereal rye. Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	USDA Cereal Rye Plant Guide

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Cultural Traits

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	3,000 - 8,000		Managing Cover Crops Profitably (modified by research data from Coastal Plain)
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	25 - 50	These values are for total N in cereal rye aboveground biomass is due to N scavenging.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Life Cycle	Cool season annual grain		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Growth Habit	Upright		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Preferred Soil pH	5.0 - 7.0	Cereal rye is more tolerant of acidic soils than oats or wheat. It is more adapted to sandy soils than other small grains.	Georgia Forages, Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Relative Costs ($/acre)	$$$		Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	34°	Cereal rye is best choice for late planting as it grows at 5 degrees lower temperatures than other small grains.	Georgia Forages, Managing Cover Crops Profitably, Noble Research Institute
Cautions	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
It is high quality forages that can be grown throughout the south. Forage quality declines rapidly in spring as rye matures. Rye matures earlier and produces more forage in early-mid winter than other small grains. Thus, it is a good option for early grazing or baleage/sileage on crop land that must be prepared in early spring for summer row crops. If planted in early fall, it usually produces good grazing by late fall. To extend forage production, rye can be mixed with ryegrass and/or clovers.	UGA Forages Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Sources:

Georgia Forages:
http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension-outreach/commodities/forages/species-and-varieties/cool-season/rye.html

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center Annual Reports:
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ga/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_022076

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

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

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

USDA Cereal Rye Plant Guide: https://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_sece.pdf

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