

Oats can produce a good amount of biomass and are the most palatable small grain. Oats are more susceptible to Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus and rust than cereal rye. Oats may winterkill in the Piedmont, Mountains, and Ridge & Valley with successive nights below 20°F. Try the more cold-tolerant varieties in these regions.

Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Coker 277	Standard variety, cold tolerant.	
Horizon 720, NF 402, RAM LA99016	Good forage varieties, resistant to crown rust, good biomass.	UGA Forages
Cosaque	Good cold tolerance, more susceptible to rust than rye or black oats. Cosaque is sometimes mistakenly sold as a black oat but is <i>Avena sativa</i> .	
Heavy Grazer II	Developed for biomass production. Good cold tolerance.	East Texas Seed

Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)	½ - 1 ½	Managing Cover Crops Profitably; UGA Forages
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	60 - 100	Managing Cover Crops Profitably; UGA Forages
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)	110 – 120 Not recommended for pastures	Managing Cover Crops Profitably; UGA Forages

Termination Information

Information	Source
Oats typically winterkill in Zone 7 or colder. Oats can be terminated by heavy grazing. Oats can also be terminated by herbicides, rolling & crimping, mowing, or tillage. Herbicides are usually more effective after blooming (anthesis). Farmer experience indicates Cosaque is difficult to kill with glyphosate before heading.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably GA county agent – personal communication
Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	

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Cultural Traits

Traits	Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	2,000 - 7,000	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	N/A	
Life Cycle	Cool season annual cereal	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Growth Habit	Upright	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Preferred Soil pH	5.5 - 7.5	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)	38°	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
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. May be eaten to the ground by deer. Oats are the most palatable of the small grains.	

Forage Traits

Information	Source
Oats can produce high quality forage in late fall (if seeded in mid-fall) and spring in the Piedmont, but winter-kill limits their use as you move north and into the Mountain regions. Late frosts or cold snaps can also kill/damage spring planted oats. They produce more forage, later into the spring than cereal rye and can be cut for hay (if mowed with a mower-conditioner) or baleage/silage. However, oats are not as productive as ryegrass in the spring and are not very grazing tolerant.	UGA Forages Virginia Cooperative Extension
To extend the production season, oats can be mixed with ryegrass and/or clovers.	

Sources:

East Texas Seed: <https://www.easttexasseedcompany.com/oatswheat.php>

Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center Annual Reports:
<http://caes2.caes.uga.edu/commodities/fieldcrops/forages/species/Oat.html>

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

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

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

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