

**Canola (*Brassica napus*), Turnips (*Brassica rapa L. var. rapa (L.) Thell*), Collards (*B. oleracea var. acephala* and *B. juncea*), Kale (*Brassica napus L. var. pabularia*), Mustards (*Brassica spp.*)** Several brassicas are used in cover crop mixtures. If planted early in fall, they can provide good forage during winter and early spring, if they do not winterkill. These also loosen the soil, scavenge nitrogen, and provide early flowers for beneficial insects and pollinators. All brassicas need to be planted early, preferably before end of September for adequate growth. They can be planted early in hotter August weather.

### Recommended Varieties

Variety	Reasons Why	Source
Dwarf Essex, Bonar, Pasja (Forage), Appin (Forage)	Rapeseed varieties provide early flowers and fibrous root systems. Forage varieties typically produce more aboveground biomass. Can be used in row crop/animal operations.	
T-Raptor	Hybrid between turnips and rape.	
Hunter and Winfred Hybrid turnips	Provide good cover and some weed control.	Green Cover Seed

### Planting Information

Information	Comments	Source
Drilled Seed Depth (inches)      ¼ - ¾	Depends on the species as seed size greatly varies	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Drilled Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)      5 - 12		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Broadcast Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)      8 - 15	Not recommended for overseeding in dormant pastures	Managing Cover Crops Profitably

### Termination Information

Information	Source
Brassicas do not reliably winterkill in the Piedmont. They may winterkill in the Mountains and Ridge & Valley. Brassicas can be terminated by heavy grazing. Brassicas can also be terminated by herbicides, mowing, and tillage. They need to be killed before full bloom to prevent seed set. Termination with herbicides is most effective when the plant is less than 10 inches tall. Rapeseed has proved difficult to kill with glyphosate, requiring a higher than normal rate of application – at least 1 quart/ac of glyphosate – and possibly multiple applications. Many Extension recommendations are for glyphosate + 2,4-D at 1 pt to 1 qt/acre. Addition of atrazine before corn/sorghum or metribuzin before soybeans should be considered. Dicamba has no herbicide activity. If not completely killed, rapeseed volunteers can be a problem in the subsequent crop. Turnips can be rolled and crimped when they are in flower, but roller crimping is not usually a reliable termination method for brassicas.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably, USDA Field Mustard Plant Guide, VA county agent – personal communication
Consult your local Extension and state Pest Management Handbook for herbicide recommendations. Always follow the herbicide label.	

**Cultural Traits**

Traits		Comments	Source
Typical Dry Matter Range (lbs/acre)	2,000 - 5,000		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Typical Total N Range (lbs/acre)	N/A	Rapeseed is very good at N scavenging and mustards are good.	Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Life Cycle	Winter annuals or biennials		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Growth Habit	Upright		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Preferred Soil pH	5.5 - 8.0		Managing Cover Crops Profitably
Relative Seed Cost (\$/acre)	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	Kale and mustard are more expensive than rapeseed.	Based on survey of seed costs using maximum price and max seeding rate
Min. Germination Temp (F)	40 - 45°		Managing Cover Crops Profitably, USDA Field Mustard Plant Guide
Cautions	Cattle must be trained to graze brassicas.		

**Forage Traits**

Information	Source
Brassicas provide good quality forage during winter and early spring but should never make up more than 75 percent of cattle diet because of their low fiber content.	UGA Forages

**Sources:**

Green Cover Seed: <https://www.greencoverseed.com/>

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

USDA Field Mustard Plant Guide: [https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg\\_brrar.pdf](https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_brrar.pdf)

UGA Forages: <https://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu/>