

Oregon-Quality ANNUAL RYEGRASS

Management Quick Guide

Proven Benefits of Annual Ryegrass (ARG):

- Greater rooting depth.
- Reduce or eliminate soil erosion.
- Reduce N and P runoff into surface water.
- Increase soil tilth and water infiltration.
- Capture residual soil N.
- Increase crop yields, especially in years of low summer rainfall.

Annual ryegrass variety selection and Seeding Dates:

- Select a variety with adequate winter hardiness that has been tested in the Midwest.
- Mixes well with other species, such as radish and clover, but not with cereal rye.
- Plant when soil temp is still above 60° F.
- If seeding after corn/soybean harvest:
 - Above highway I-70, seed late August-September 15.
 - Below highway I-70 seed September 10 – October 1.
- N is not necessary on fields with adequate residual N.
- Adding 30 lb N/ac will increase plant growth and may help with winter survival.

Before planting annual ryegrass as a cover crop:

- Residual herbicide in the soil can reduce or kill a cover crop.
- Some products have up to 24 months restrictions on planting cover crops.
- Check out the list of herbicides here: ryegrasscovercrop.com/publications.

Equipment:

- Drilling is the most dependable method (12-15 lb/ac).
- Seed depth ¼ - ½ inch.
- Germination occurs in 7-10 days.
- Broadcast with airflow spreader or fan spreader allows mix of fertilizer and seed (20-25 lb/ac). Experienced growers having good luck with lower rates.
- May run vertical tillage tool or very shallow tillage to provide some incorporation.
- Fan spreader pattern requires ½ rate, then double spreading due to light weight of ARG seed - spread width is 25 feet, not 60 feet.
- Establishment is more weather dependent than planting with a no-till drill.
- Aerial allows early broadcast seeding; more important in locations north of I-70. More consistent results in corn. Seeding rate (20-25 lb/ac).
- Pilot advisory: calibrate plane (light seed results in narrower swath) and do not broadcast if wind is > 7 mph. Spread end-rows first to prevent seed on neighbors.
- In corn: seed after leaves turn yellow; 4-6 weeks before harvest.
- In soybeans: in general, seed when beans are yellow and after 1st leaf drop. Successful seeding can occur when beans are green or turning yellow.
- High clearance seeders can also aid early planting into standing crops
- Modified “Hi-Boy” sprayers have been used successfully.
- Similar to broadcast methods, establishment depends on rainfall.

Growth and development:

- Even if stand looks thin in the fall, it will develop significant root growth.
- By Mid-April, most root growth has occurred.
- Roots 28-31” in fragipan and claypan soils.
- Roots 48-50” in better soil with no restrictive layer.



Converting to no-till with cover crops requires new management know-how.

“RESIDUAL HERBICIDE CAN KILL A COVER CROP”

For information on using
and managing Annual Ryegrass
as a cover crop, visit:
ryegrasscovercrop.com/publications



Annual Ryegrass is the fastest cover crop to establish, whether with a drill or broadcast.



Annual Ryegrass' deep roots allow subsequent corn and soybean roots to find additional moisture.

Continued On back

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Management Quick Guide *(Continued)*

Annual Ryegrass control:

WHEN?

- ARG should be actively growing (5-7 days), with soil temp above 45° F.
- Late March/Mid-April – with the plant typically 6-9” tall.
- Good spray coverage with medium spray droplets is key.

USING GLYPHOSATE?

- Use full rates: 1.25-1.50 lb a.e./ac minimum even if the ryegrass is small.
- Daytime temp a minimum of 55° F (Soil above 45° F).
- Night time temp should be above 38° F (3 nights above 40° F).
- Spray at least 4 hours before sunset.
- Reduce water volume to 8-12 gpa.
- Do not use nozzles that produce coarse spray droplets.
- Pay attention to water quality. Use AMS plus water conditioners or pH buffers according to label directions and follow order of mixing carefully.
- Two applications may be necessary if initial spray conditions were marginal.

USING GRAMOXONE OR GLUFOSINATE?

- Full label rate only 70-85% effective on ARG, worse after node development.
- Two applications (2-3 weeks apart) improve control.

PLANTING CORN AFTER ARG:

- Don't add atrazine or Calisto to glyphosate. You'll cut effectiveness by 40%.
- OK to add simazine, Prowl H2O, Basis Blend, or other residual herbicides for better weed control. Or apply 7-10 days later.
- ARG “escapes” can be controlled with labeled rates of Accent Q, Steadfast Q, or Option.

PLANTING SOYBEANS AFTER ARG:

- Early kill of ARG allows quick decomposition and a good seed bed for beans
- Using RR seeds allows easier control of “escapes”.
- ARG can be controlled in beans with Select Max, Poast Plus, or Fusilade DX. Use MSO and liquid fertilizer according to product labels.
- Poast and Assure have shown poor control.

PLANTING WHEAT AFTER ARG:

- ARG can be a very competitive weed in winter wheat.
- If ARG has sprouted, apply a glyphosate burn down before planting wheat.
- Consider using a preemergence or early postemergence herbicide such as Axiom or Zidua to control annual ryegrass that emerges with the wheat.
- Spray a post-emergence grass herbicide like Osprey, Axial XL, or PowerFlex in late fall or early spring. Check plant back restrictions.

Listing of brand or trade names is for guidance only, not a endorsement of those products.



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Aerial seeding into a standing crop is an efficient method of broadcasting seed.



Annual ryegrass can substantially increase corn yield, especially in a dry year.



Seeding annual ryegrass into standing corn.



Preliminary research suggests annual ryegrass may also curtail soybean cyst nematode.

For more information, including a detailed management guide for ryegrass as a cover crop, check the website of the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission:

RyegrassCovercrop.com