

Farm Info Network

Q. I am interested in reduced tillage farming and would like to use cover crops which can be used as winterkilled mulches. Can crimson clover and lupine be used for this purpose? I have sandy soils.

Ste Justin-de-Newton Quebec

A. Yes, both crimson clover and lupin will winterkill and grow well on sandy soils. However, neither of these species is very competitive with weeds. They may work better in mixtures with other species. Crimson clover can be undersown in spring cereals at the 3 leaf stage. Earlier seeding may cause climbing in the grain. Lupins would probably be best sown immediately following a winter cereal harvest. They will grow late in the fall because of their frost tolerance.

Other species which could be used with the crimson clover are westerwold annual ryegrass and common vetch (not seeded too early with the vetch or climbing may result). In spring and winter cereals, we have had success drill 9 vetch into the cereal when the cereal is about 6 in. tall.

Other species which could be seeded after a winter cereal harvest include: buckwheat, oilseed radish, white mustard and phacelia. White mustard can be seeded a little later than the other species (up to Sept 1) since it grows very rapidly. It can also be considered an alternative to oilseed radish, which has caused tile plugging due to its deep root system. White mustard has shallower roots. Further information on this subject can be obtained from:

La Technique des Engrais Verts, 1987. 55 pp. Available from CARAB Agrobiologie info-conseils Rue de Wastimes, 7 B-5974 Opprebous Belgique

Q. I would like to know what to seed between blueberry plant rows (Highbush) to acidify the soil.

Ste. Hyacinthe Quebec

A. As far as we know, no living plant will substantially decrease soil pH. Sawdust is the best mulch to use for blueberries since it helps plant growth, particularly the spreading of lowbush blueberry types. Most growers use elemental sulphur to acidify the soil. The recommended soil pH for blueberry production is 4.5 - 5.0. It is not recommended that any attempt be made to acidify soils above 6.5. It is easier to lower the pH of lighter soils with less buffering capacity.

Thanks to Debra Hoffman, Ontario's blueberry specialist for providing this information.

OMAF has several factsheets on blueberries which can be obtained from Debra Hoffman, Kemptville college of Agr. Tech, Kemptville, Ontario. KEG 1Jû.

An excellent publication available in french is "La culture de Bleuets au Québec", Station Res. Agr. Can., C.P. 457, 430 Blvd Gouin, St Jean sur Richelieu, Québec. J3B 3E6.

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