



WATSON SEEDS



Game Cover & Conservation Mixtures



BASIC GUIDELINES FOR GROWING GAME COVER

Establishment of a successful gamecover crop requires the same level of attention to detail that a conventional agricultural crop requires.

The siting of areas for gamecover undoubtedly dictates which species of gamecover crop will prove to be successful. Brassicas (kale, rape, fodder radish and mustard) all dislike wet and compacted ground. Kale is regarded as the mainstay of many good gamecrops however it can be challenging to grow successfully as like all Brassicas it needs fertile free draining soil and protection from grazing pests particularly in its early stage of growth.



Photos

Top: Adam Girdwood, Philiphaugh Estate, Selkirk in Swift.

Middle: Partridge

Bottom: Robert Neill, Upper Nisbet, in field of Grampian Kale

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER:



Soil test: pH, phosphate, potash and clubroot if necessary.



Apply lime to achieve pH of 6.0-6.5



Apply adequate quantities of NPK fertiliser (crops such as kale are highly dependent on adequate nitrogen being applied).



Seedbed preparation: small seeds require a very fine tilth in order to germinate.



MIXTURE COMPONENT INFORMATION

FODDER RADISH (BRASSICA)

A very fast establishing catch crop which is ideal for Scotland. Seed pods are a useful food source in year one.

KALE (BRASSICA)

Kale gives a good winter hardy canopy which is loved by pheasants. Sow between April and early July. Requires a good fertile free draining site.

LINSEED (FLAX)

Provides a good food source. It is hardy and easy to grow providing open cover so good for small bird access. Inexpensive and easy to establish between late March and mid May.

MUSTARD (BRASSICA)

Known mainly as a green manure crop. It is very rapid to establish and is fairly pest and disease resistant. Due to its rapid establishment it is quite often used as a quick fix if an earlier sown crop has failed.

QUINOA (PSEUDO-CEREAL)

Best sown end of April to early June and requires warm, fertile, compact seedbed. Can be slow to establish. Excellent food source for wild birds and game birds in year one.

RAPE (BRASSICA)

Very fast establishment - often within 7 to 8 weeks.

RAPE/KALE HYBRID

See page 5 for more information

RED CLOVER (LEGUME)

A tap rooted plant which grows to 0.75 metres and will last up to four years. The tap root provides wonderful soil conditioning when the crop is eventually ploughed in.

TRITICALE (CEREAL)

Quick and robust to establish. Triticale has good pest and disease resistance.

YELLOW BLOSSOM SWEET CLOVER (LEGUME)

A biennial (2year crop) which grows a rosette in year one and grows to 2 metres when it flowers in year two. It produces small seeds which benefits both song birds and game birds and is very complimentary when grown with kale.





GAME COVER MIXTURES

Where brassicas have been grown on gameplots regularly in previous years without a seven year absence then Caledonian Kale should be specified as it has the best clubroot resistance of all the kale varieties.

GCI	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Kale	1.5	3kgs/acre	0.5cm
Quinoa	1.5		

Offers food and shelter for wild birds and game in year 1 and 2.

GC2	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Kale	2.0	3kgs/acre	0.5cm
Sweet Clover	1.0		

Cover for game from kale in year 1. Food and cover from both components in year 2.

GC3	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Triticale (spring)	28.0	30kgs/acre	0.5cm
Kale	1.0		
Quinoa	1.0		

Cover and food for game and wild birds in year 1 and 2

GC4	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Kale	1.0	2kgs/acre	0.5cm
Red Clover	1.0		

Cover for game from kale and red clover. Attracts pollinating insects (incl. bees).

GC5	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Rape/Kale Hybrid	2	3kgs/acre	0.5cm
Fodder Radish	1		

Establishes rapidly. Cover for game and food for wild birds. Reasonably pest resistant.

GC6	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Mustard	1.5	4kgs/acre	0.5cm
Forage Rape	1.5		
Fodder Radish	1.0		

Similar to GC5. Can tolerate poor ground and is often used after a previous crop failure.

GC1-4 are designed to last for two seasons as kale is a biennial in vegetative state in year one and flowers in year two. This also applies to yellow blossom clover. GC5 and GC 6 are one year mixtures.



RAPE/KALE HYBRID

In recent years the development of rape/kale hybrids have presented us with opportunities to grow effective gamecover on land where perhaps kale would prove too much of a challenge.

- FEATURES:
- They are a catch crop forage as opposed to maincrop.
 - They are quick to establish.
 - They take about 16 weeks to reach maturity.
 - They are biennial (but flower too early to be used as a 2 year crop).

- BENEFITS:
- Can be sown late (ideally July).
 - Rapid establishment and growth renders them less vulnerable to grazing pests.
 - Will tolerate less fertile soil than kale.
 - They are less expensive than kale.

VARIETIES: Swift, Redstart, Pulsar

SOWING RATE: 2-3kgs/acre depending on seedbed, site and drilling technique.

LONG TERM GAMECOVER OPTIONS

On some shoots the ever increasing costs of establishing a gamecrop along with associated signs of failure are being partially overcome by sowing longer lasting species which offer good cover for several years.

Variety	Sowing Rate (kg/acre)
Reed Canary Grass	2.5
Chicory	2.0
Stand & Deliver	2.0
Red Clover	5.0





AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEME MIXTURES

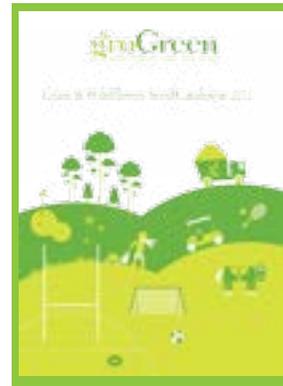
Variety	
S1	Ribwort Plantain Self Heal Yarrow Black Knapweed Lady's Bedstraw Sheeps Sorrel Birdsfoot Trefoil
Supplement One for management or grazed areas	

Variety	
S2	Ribwort Plantain Self Heal Yarrow Meadow Buttercup Black Knapweed Lady's Bedstraw Sheeps Sorrel Birdsfoot Trefoil Yellow Rattle
Supplement Two for areas under little management with Yellow Rattle	

Throughout recent years we have supplied a considerable volume of wild flower mixtures largely to comply with agri-environmental schemes. These mixtures establish best on less fertile sites where the companion grasses do not compete too heavily with the wild flower species. Freedom from injurious weeds is also key to success and any site being considered for these mixtures should undergo stale seedbed preparation whereby the ground is cultivated to get the weeds to germinate. The weeds are then sprayed off and only once the weeds are satisfactorily eliminated can sowing of wild flower mixtures take place.

Recommended seed rate for CG with wildflowers:
6-8kgs/acre
5-20kgs/Ha

For a range of specialist wildflower mixtures, please contact the office on 01368 840655 for a [gruGreen](#) catalogue.



Type	
CG	Crested Dogstail Strong Red Fescue Chewings Fescue Slender Red Fescue Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass Brown Top Bent Grass Red Clover
Companion Grass Mix for Wildflower Mixtures	



Type	
TF	Timothy Cocksfoot Creeping Red Fescue Red Clover
Tussock Forming	



Type	
MF	Crested Dogstail Sheeps Fescue Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass Timothy Cocksfoot Meadow Fescue Highland Bent Creeping Red Fescue Red Clover
Mat Forming & Low Growing	



Recommended Seed Rate for TF & MF:
8-10kgs/acre
20-25kgs/Ha

Photos

Top: Wildflower mixture sown at Skateraw,
 Middle: Crested Dogstail
 Bottom: Mr & Mrs Kerr with their daughter Megan, in a field of Caledonian Kale at Blackburnmill, Grantshouse, Duns

Opposite Page: Margaret Nelson, Spearford, Castle Douglas

For more information on Game Cover and Conservation mixtures, or to discuss your requirements in more detail, call Peter Addie on 07813 845577



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