



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.

## 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.



### Photos

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

Middle: Partridge

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



# MIXTURE COMPONENT INFORMATION

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## 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.

<b>GCI</b>	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.

<b>GC2</b>	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.

<b>GC3</b>	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

<b>GC4</b>	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).

<b>GC5</b>	Kg/acre	Sowing Rate	Sowing Depth
Rape/Kale Hybrid	2.0	3kgs/acre	0.5cm
Fodder Radish	1.0		

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

<b>GC6</b>	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

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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

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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

<u>SI</u>	Variety
Supplement One  for management or grazed areas	Ribwort
	Plantain
	Self Heal
	Yarrow
	Black Knapweed
	Lady's Bedstraw
Sheeps Sorrel	
Birdsfoot Trefoil	

<u>S2</u>	Variety
Supplement Two  for areas under little management with Yellow Rattle	Ribwort
	Plantain
	Self Heal
	Yarrow
	Meadow Buttercup
	Black Knapweed
	Lady's Bedstraw
	Sheeps Sorrel
	Birdsfoot Trefoil
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 [groGreen](http://www.grogreen.co.uk) catalogue.

A great field of GroGreen GG90 Heritage Wildflower mixture sown by McConchie Partnership at Mossyard, Gatehouse of Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire.



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



<u>TF</u>	Type
Tussock Forming	Timothy Cocksfoot Creeping Red Fescue Red Clover



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



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





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