

Fertilisation using green manure

To make green manure, certain plants are sown in the vegetable garden after harvest or in winter, and then buried in the soil before the next series of vegetable crops.

Benefits

- This process protects against evaporation, erosion and nutrient leaching.
- Unwanted wild plants are discarded.
- Flowers provide food for beneficial garden insects such as bees.
- Helps loosen and aerate the soil.
- Allows dead plant material to be used for mulching or composting, thus preserving nutrients.

How and when to fertilise with green manure

- All year round.
- As a preceding crop for frost-sensitive plants.
- As a cover crop for tall crops.
- In garden beds, where there is a lot of space between rows and in thick layers like mulch.
- As an intermediate crop to protect uncultivated beds in the short term (fast-growing green manure plants).
- As a late-season supplementary crop, to protect the soil until spring.



Soil improvement

The right plants for green manure

- Grow fast.
- Can be removed by freezing or digging.
- Should not belong to the same family as the seedling to follow in order to prevent disease (e.g. cabbage after rapeseed) (see leaflet on **Fertilisation by crop rotation**).



The ideal plants for green manure are:

1. **Phacelia:** not related to any vegetable species except borage.
2. **Plants from the legume family (Fabaceae):** thanks to the bacteria on their roots (nodules), they bind atmospheric nitrogen, which is returned to the soil when the plant dies.
3. **Brassicaceae:** They grow fast and loosen the soil with their powerful roots.
4. **Vegetable plants:** Spinach and lamb's lettuce work well as green manure between rows of vegetables.

Plant species	Plant family	Sowing period
Blue lupin	Fabaceae (legumes)	III/IV-IX
Yellow lupin	Fabaceae (legumes)	III/IV-IX
Crimson clover	Fabaceae (legumes)	VII-IX
Radish	Brassicaceae	IV-IX
Winter rapeseed	Brassicaceae	VIII-X
Sunflower	Asteraceae	III/IV-VII
Marigolds (<i>Tagetes</i>)	Asteraceae	IV-VIII
Buckwheat	Polygonaceae (knotweed family)	III/IV - VIII
Field pea	Fabaceae (legumes)	III/IV - VIII
Summer vetch	Fabaceae (legumes)	III/IV - VIII
Phacelia	Boraginaceae (forget-me-not family)	III/IV - VIII
Winter vetch	Fabaceae (legumes)	VIII-IX
White mustard	Brassicaceae	III-IX
Winter rye	Poaceae	II-XI
Marigolds (<i>Calendula</i>)	Asteraceae	III-IX



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1.



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2.



© Photos Stock - rapeseed

3.



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4.

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