

Green manuring for fertilizer reduction.

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I've been growing vegetables commercially since 1975. I've been on my current land since 1981 and grow about 45 acres of mixed vegetables. I sell over half my crops wholesale. I have no almost animals on the farm (a couple of hundred laying hens.) and use little or no animal manures. Green manures are an important part of my cropping system.

Green Manures captured my imagination very early in my career, and over the years I have tried a lot of different crops for adding fertility to my sandy loam soils.

Above all else I'm hoping to convey in a contagious manner, my own passion for green manures.

I'm going to touch on my personal experience with a number of green manures including:

- Winter Rye
- Oats
- Hairy Vetch
- Sorghum Sudan Grass
- Japanese Millet
- Red Clover
- Buckwheat
- Winter Wheat
- Spring Wheat
- Barley
- Mustard

I'll reflect briefly on the benefits and idiosyncrasies of each of these green manures.

I'll talk about which ones I still use and why.

Why some of these crops didn't work for me, but might for you.

Some unusual techniques I really like.

Calculating fertilizer contribution for the crop to follow a green manure.

Green manures are probably not going to make you, or save you, immediate, tangible, big money. So why bother?

Why green manures, cover crops and rotations are the core of a sustainable cropping system.