

## COMPOST CROPS . . .

ENRICH THE SOIL with available nutrients and minerals. Some crops fix NITROGEN or accumulate PHOSPHOROUS in soil.

### IMPROVE SOIL STRUCTURE

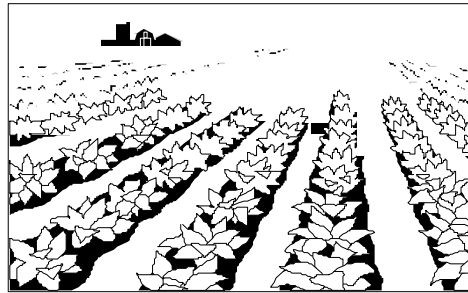
- Keep nutrients from leaching beyond the reach of crops.
- Help produce good soil structure and maintain air spaces essential for good crop health.
- **Till the earth** for you.
- ALFALFA can send down roots as deep as 60 feet and fixes nitrogen in soil. Clear alfalfa at 3 months and roots will decompose in the ground.
- A single RYE plant can produce many feet of roots per day. Roots help loose soils bind together and clay soils open up.

### DECREASE DISEASE AND PEST PROBLEMS

Interrupts disease and pest cycles.

### PROVIDE ORGANIC MATTER FOR COMPOST OR MULCH

### PROVIDE FORAGE FOR ANIMALS



### SUPPRESS WEEDS

- Provide living mulch that will protect soil from erosion and other weathering effects.
- Fall-planted compost crops will pump excess water out of the soil, allowing you to prepare the soil and plant crops much earlier than usual.
- **Fava Beans** can pump soil dry in as little as five days of warm weather.
- Used for centuries, they are an essential part of crop rotation.
- Increase soil biological activity.
- Feed earthworms and soil organisms.

### WHICH COMPOST CROP?

- Consider length of growing season and soil type.
- SEE LIST ON BACK PAGE
- SEED COMPANIES

[www.BountifulGardens.org](http://www.BountifulGardens.org), Willits 707 459-6410  
[www.HarmonyFarm.com](http://www.HarmonyFarm.com), Graton 707 823-9125  
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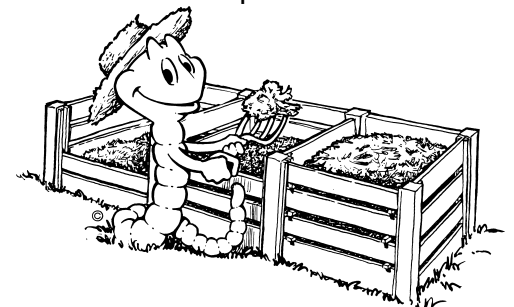
## TURN IN THE COMPOST CROP

**Spade directly into the soil** and wait 14 to 30 days for it to decompose before planting.

**COMPOST IT** for maximum benefit.

The secret to successful composting is to combine equal weights of **FRESH GREEN ORGANIC MATTER** providing nitrogen with **DRY BROWN ORGANIC MATTER** (carbon). The carbon holds the water-soluble nitrogen in the compost and later in the soil. Adding one-third topsoil (by weight) slows and cools the composting process producing up to 40% more compost. Hotter piles, in effect, burn off part of their mass.

By making compost from your compost crops you not only increase soil volume and quality, but feed earthworms and soil organisms, which in turn stimulate and speed up the release of nutrients, thus making more nutrients available for the next crop.



## THE COMPOST CROPS

### ORGANIC MATTER & COVER CROPS

. . . *These crops bring minerals to the surface and most are fast growing.*

**BLANDO BROOM GRASS** -Erosion control, drought tolerant

**CHICORY**, Red - Breaks up soil.

**FODDER RADISH** - Deep tap root.

**MUSTARD**, Ag. - Plant in poor soil.

**SUNN HEMP** - Deep tap root. **N**

**SUDAN GRASS** - Heat-loving, Weed-choking cover crop.

### SHOWY FLOWERS



**PHACELIA** - Blue flowers, good ground cover, attracts beneficial insects.

**CROWN VETCH** - Conditions soil holds moisture. **N**

**PURPLE VETCH** - Beautiful purple flowers, vigorous growth, smothers winter weeds. **N**

**WOOLY VETCH** - Medium fast growing in poor soil, heat/drought tolerant. **N**

### CLOVERS

**CRIMSON** - Red flowers, fast growing, long roots. **N**

**NITRO PERSIAN** - Purple flowers, erosion control, forage. **N**

**O'CONNORS LEGUME** Red flowers, dense mat, ground cover **N**

### FORAGE

**ALFALFA** - Deep rooted. **N**

**PEA**, Austrian Field - Plant with oats. **N**

### GRAINS

**BARLEY**- Fast growing, straw.

**BUCKWHEAT** - Breaks up soil, Competes with weeds. **P**



**FLAX** - Sky-blue flowers, seeds High in edible oil.

**OATS** - Grain, hay. **OM**

**QUINOA** - Ancient Andean grain, spinach like leaves **OM**

**RAPE SEED** - Canola oil, winter cover.

**RYE** - Grain. **OM**

**SORGHUM** - Grain, forage. **OM**

**SOYBEANS** - Edible beans, forage. **N**

**SUNFLOWER** - Seeds, oil. **OM**

**TRITICALE** - Wheat/rye cross **OM**

**WHEAT** - Good roots, grain, straw.

### EDIBLE CROPS

**AMARANTH** - leaves and grain edible.

**CARDOON** - Tasty leaves. **OM**

**CORN** - Grain, forage. **OM**

**COWPEAS** - smothers weeds. **N**

**FAVA BEANS** - Good beans, flowers. **N**

**FENUGREEK** - opens heavy soils, seeds for cooking. **N**

**GARBANZO BEANS** - Protein-Rich edible beans forage. **N**

**MOTH BEANS** - Good beans, Chokes weeds, protects soil. **N**



**N** - Builds or fixes **NITROGEN**

**OM** - **ORGANIC MATTER**

**P** - accumulates **PHOSPHOROUS**

## Compost Crops



COMPOST CROPS are easy to grow. They feed your soil when you are not using your garden.

Sponsored by  
The City of Vallejo  
&  
VALCORE Recycling



[www.VALCORErecycling.org](http://www.VALCORErecycling.org)

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