



# Dwarf Essex Rape

Dwarf Essex is a short, fine stemmed forage rape that is widely adapted. It has tolerance to cold, heat and drought. The highly palatable forage produces up to 20% protein and can be grazed 6-8 weeks after planting. It can be re-grazed at 30 day intervals, if given adequate time, nutrition and moisture. Fast germination and growth make it ideal for weed suppression, reducing surface compaction, and winter cover.

## Establishment:

Fall plowing and preparation of a good firm seedbed is desirable as rape seeds are small. Cultipacking before seeding make a firm even seedbed. Germination must be fast with uniform emergence for the crop to get ahead of the weeds.

Rape may be seeded in early spring for a summer crop, in the summer for a fall crop, or in early fall for winter grazing. Soil should be firm and moist to encourage rapid development of young seedlings.

## Seeding depth:

If drilled, plant seed 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) deep or less for good establishment.

## Fertilization and liming:

As a member of the Cruciferae family, rape requires relatively large quantities of sulfur for good growth. Apply at least 20 lbs/acre (22 kg/ha) of sulfur before planting or as a spring top dressing if fall planted. Summer or fall plantings should receive 50 lbs/acre (56 kg/ha) of N with an additional 50 lbs (56 kg) of N applied in spring. Apply phosphorus and potassium as needed.

## Forage:

Rape is planted almost exclusively for temporary pasture, although it may be used for silage. It frequently is seeded alone for pasture, but mixing oats or annual ryegrass with rape will provide somewhat earlier grazing. Feed quality of rape is very good, and pasture will compare favorably with alfalfa.

Dwarf Essex Rape overwinters in many regions and will make a good winter grazing crop or cover crop.

## At A Glance

- Excellent multiple graze forage with high tonnage
- Extends grazing season
- Can be included in an overwintering grazing or cover crop scenario
- Good in combination with cool season annual or summer annual grasses
- Excellent feed values, highly palatable and nutritious
- Great source of protein and energy
- Anti-parasitic properties, enhancing animal health

## Best Uses

Grazing

## Establishment

**Planting Dates:** Early spring through summer; fall for overwintering crop. If spring planted in a cold climate, best planted with an oats nurse crop for brassica seedling protection.

**Seeding Rate:** 4-5 lbs/A, 1-3 lbs/A in mixture

**Seeding Depth:** 1/8" - Can also broadcast followed by cultipacking if not planted in a mix with larger seeds.



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